



ENGLISH STUDY CENTER

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Gender and class participation:  
Cape Verdean reality in the efl classrooms

Licenciatura em Estudos Ingleses

ISE, 2008

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**GENDER AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:  
Cape Verdean Reality in the EFL Classrooms**

Trabalho Científico apresentado no ISE para obtenção do grau de Licenciatura sob orientação  
de Anthony Justin Barnum

**The Jury**

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Praia, \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de 2008

## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, brothers and sisters and my lovely nephew Edgar who gave me special motivation to write this paper.

## Acknowledgements

A challenging work, my thesis, could not be completed without the help of many people. There are many people I would like to thank for their assistance on my thesis process. But the very, very first person I thank and always thank is Jesus, for the knowledge he gave me to write. The second person to whom I am extremely grateful is my supervisor Anthony Justin Barnum. His guidance and patience for me are unforgettable. My gratitude also goes to Emily Irene Longenecker for her excellent assistance with statistical issues and proofreading.

This work would not have been possible without the contribution of my friends, my school mates Benjamin Amado, Jair Martins, Zita Vieira, Alessandro Silva for their help. I also would like to thank the students and teachers specifically Professora Vanda in Cesaltina Ramos for her patience in helping me to set my questionnaires at that school, also all the directors and sub-directors of the schools where I applied my data for giving me permission.

Finally, but not least I wish to thank my family. I am thankful for the help of my sister Francisca and her son Edgar my nephew, for each smile he gave me in my tired moments. I also thank those who prayed to God for my success during the process. I equally would like to thank my parents for their support and love.

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the relationship between gender and class participation in Cape Verdean EFL classrooms. Through personal observation, it was observed that girls and boys do not have the same rate of participation in EFL classrooms. Boys were originally observed to participate more than girls. To this end it was investigated in Cape Verdean secondary schools, if boys truly participate more than girls and if so why. This study used questionnaires and observations of classrooms in order to see if girls or boys participate more in class. Teachers and students took part of the study. 411 students took part in the study, where 207 were girls and 184 were boys. In addition there were 20 teachers surveyed. Surprisingly, it was found that girls participate more than boys. The results of the study showed that girls participate more than boys and teachers expect more from them than the boys. It is hoped that these results will call teachers attention to this issue and help them to better contribute to equality in the class concerning participation.



## **I. Introduction**

Class participation is the way students involve themselves in learning. When students ask and answer questions, they make comments about what teachers and students say in the classroom even when they are not called upon. It is a way to monitor students' progress, and it is one of the components of grading a student. It is an important tool to help students grow in the learning process. "Class participation is considered an essential element in almost any class including the ESL classroom" (Vandrick 2000, p.1). It is essential, because of its' relevance on students' opportunity to achieve a higher level of academic success. In the language classroom this is particularly important because of the need to evaluate oral proficiency, to see how well students are acquiring the language. For this, students should participate actively, if not they fail in their goals as learners. Vandrick adds "students who do not participate actively in class are often considered to be lazy, unprepared, passive, or uninvolved and are generally penalized when class grades are assigned" (p.1).

To participate orally in a Foreign Language classroom it is necessary to have working knowledge of the language; working knowledge because students should have the level that enables them to communicate in the Foreign Language. Another factor that is important in the Foreign Language is students' interest, and their engagement. Guthrie and Alverman said in a 1999 study that "meaningful learning takes place when students are engaged, that is, when students demonstrate interest, motivation, and participation in the process of learning. (Craven and Hogan, 2001, p.2). These are some features required from a foreign language learner. It is necessary to have an interest in the language and be active in the language classroom. But there are many other additional factors that influence the way students learn a foreign language such as: culture, background, attitudes and beliefs, language strategies, and gender (Tercanlioglu, 2004).

### **1.1 Purpose of Study**

This paper will focus specifically on gender because it is a significant factor, which needs to be given more attention in Cape Verdean society and in schools. An assumption can be made that there is a disparity in the educational opportunity afforded males and females based on their participation in EFL. There is a need for more information regarding instructional strategies for instructors that they may increase, activate and foster equitable students' participation in EFL classrooms. The instructors of high schools should guarantee active and equal participation from both girls and boys to better the quality of work students do in the classrooms, and to avoid gender inequality in the society. To avoid gender inequities

in schools and in the society, Ormrod (1998), suggests including “democratic ideals” in educational programs, with which students can learn to live in a democratic society. “A democracy includes equality or the freedom from bias or favoritism as well as equality. To help our students achieve maximal classroom success, we must be equitable in our treatment of them” (p.173).

One might say that this is what has been missing in our EFL classrooms. We need equality in our classrooms concerning gender and class participation because all students should benefit from their instructors and peers equally, independently of their gender. Studies have found that gender can have a significant impact on how students learn language, (Oxford, 1993, Oxford, 1995 cited by Tercanlioglu 2004). In this study Tercanlioglu researched gender issues in language strategies. Her findings show that gender has an important role in the way students use strategies in the Foreign Language. She found that girls and boys use different strategies and that boys use more strategies than girls.

However, DeWitt, (2001) conducted a personal case study on gender and class participation and found that girls have higher rates of participation than boys. Even though the difference is small, girls have 70% participation and boys 60% participation. Other research has shown that, female students are less likely than male students to speak out in the classroom (Vandrick, 2000). Vandrick explored reasons why some students with English as a foreign language do not participate in class. She concluded that the reasons for low participation are students’ background, gender, social class, and sometimes they feel ashamed to make mistakes, as the language is not their primary. There are a large amount of studies done on the subject of gender and they give a positive contribution to society. Works based on this subject are missing in the Cape Verdean context, that is why this paper is being undertaken. It will make a contribution to the society specifically for the educational system of Cape Verde.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As a foreign language learner, I have observed that male and female students do not participate at the same rate in the classroom. I have observed that boys participate more than girls. Boys speak up in class and they are ready to answer questions. They make comments and they join in the class discussion. Through my observations, I have perceived that girls participate less; they participate only when called upon. This observation though informal, was what directed me to write this thesis paper. I wanted to find out if it is true in the broader sense that girls participate less than boys in the Cape Verdean context and if so, why? That is,

if what I personally observed really happens. With this in mind, some questions can be asked: What is the relationship between students' gender and their participation in the EFL classroom? Do girls and boys participate differently in EFL classrooms? If so, why?

Another observation I have made is that while most of the boys are participating, teachers engage boys more than girls. Could it be that teachers expect more from boys than girls? If teachers engage boys more than girls, do the last have less interest to be participating in the classroom? Could it be that teachers give girls less attention than boys or is it because boys feel more comfortable than girls to speak in the class? Research shows that boys get more feedback from teachers than girls do. "Teachers talk to them more, listen to them more, and give them more active teaching attention" (Sadker & Sadker, 2000 p. 443). Sadker & Sadker as cited in Ormrod (1998) found that boys get more active teaching attention because they "ask more questions and also present more discipline problems" (p. 179). This may be part of the reason why boys participate more than girls. I intend to survey teachers to find out what are their perceptions and attitudes towards boys' and girls' participation in the EFL classroom. If gender is an issue I will make suggestions and identify strategies that would get all students to more actively participate in class. Teachers fail by giving one group of students more attention than others. Those to whom less attention is paid are penalized in their learning access. They cannot follow along as well as those to whom close attention is paid; they are "rejected" in the classroom.

It is hoped that this thesis will benefit students and teachers in the following ways. Some helpful strategies will be suggested for teachers to increase and promote active and equal participation from students in EFL classrooms. Consequently, it will help teachers in the quality of work they do in the classroom, increasing students' participation in class. To this end, suggestions will be made and strategies identified that can get all students to more actively participate in class.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The general objective of this paper is to investigate the reason why there is difference in the rate of participation between girls and boys in the Cape Verdean EFL classrooms. I want to see if there is any relationship between students' gender and their participation in EFL classrooms. To analyze this relationship, I will survey students to find out what they think about who participates more in class.

Another objective is to identify the teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes on how boys and girls participate in class. The importance of this objective is to suggest

strategies in which teachers can promote equitable and active participation from both girls and boys. Because both boys and girls are in the classroom to learn, it should be an environment without discrimination. They should have equal rights. “Teachers should create conditions for equal opportunity of learning for all students, because all students should benefit from their instructors and not be discriminated against independently of their gender, race, culture” (Borich & Tambori 1995, p. 592). Instructors have this responsibility that all students should be engaged and not be limited in their ability to learn. Instructors need to know that they are the models for their learners and that how they treat students influences them in their learning success. Students also should be aware because participation in the classroom is helpful for them. They will need it for themselves, not only for the development of their personal academic ability, but also, for their professional life and the gender roles they will play as adults. Especially because the way they are in the classroom will contribute to their future career. If they participate in the classroom it contributes to the development of their own sense of responsibility and they have the possibility to get more opportunities in the future.

Another importance of this study is to call teachers attention to the way they call on students to participate. Teachers should be aware of the need to promote equality of gender and equal participation in the EFL classrooms to make all students feel comfortable in the language and in the learning environment. Also, I want to call teachers’ attention to helping students to change their rate of participation as a source for their future success. Since English is the most spoken language in the world they need to have an active participation in EFL classes, which can help them in the future.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Gender**

This chapter reviews the literature that is related to the exploration of gender stereotypes in the society and its origins. First, I distinguish gender, sex, and gender roles by defining the terms. The distinction between these terms is made to facilitate the comprehension of the paper and to make clear why the terms “gender and gender roles” will be used instead of the term “sex”. Second, a brief background of gender and its role in the Capeverdean context is given. Third, the origins of gender stereotypes are discussed and finally some studies will be presented and the contributions that have been made to the context of gender equality in the classroom.

### **2.2 Difference Between Sex, Gender, and Gender Roles**

Even though all societies are composed of men and women, each society sees them or expects them to act differently. The terms sex, gender, and gender roles are more used to differentiate men and women, males and females. The term sex refers to the biological and physical differences between male and female. It is biological because it develops prior to birth; it determines whether a child will be male or female. Macionis (1998) defines sex as “the biological distinction between females and males. It is determined at the moment of conception as a female ovum and a male sperm join to form a fertilized embryo,” (p. 239). Sex refers to physical differences as men and women have different physical appearance.

Gender, on the other hand, is defined according to culture. Each culture defines males and females in its own way and expects them to behave, think, and feel differently. Gollnick and Chinn (1990) argue that “gender is a term that better describes the differences of masculinity and femininity- the thoughts, feelings, and behavior that are identified as being either male or female” (p.119). Similarly, Doob (1997), argues that, “traditionally most cultures have treated female and male children very differently: It guides how we think about ourselves, how we interact with others and what opportunities and constraints we face throughout our lives” (p. 170).

Gender roles are different attitudes and activities that every society links to each sex. Chinn & Gollnick (1990) say, “In every society there are characteristic tasks, manners and responsibilities associated with either men or women” (p. 122). In this paper the term gender and gender roles are the most appropriate to be mentioned, since we want to talk about them in Capeverdean society. Because in Cape Verde males and females are seen differently and

different attitudes and beliefs are given to men and women, women and men are seen to have different behaviors, thoughts, and feelings.

### **2.3 Gender and Its Role in the Capeverdean Context**

In Cape Verde, girls and boys are treated differently. Cape Verdeans think that girls and boys should act differently because men are “superior” to women. Boys are expected to be independent, strong, and to demonstrate authority. They should not be frightened, or cry, because “men don’t cry”. Girls are expected to be passive, polite, emotional, obedient, and dependent. The characteristic of dependence can be seen for example when making decisions or when solving problems. Another example of girls’ dependency is that in many cases their freedom is limited. There are things that they cannot do such as participating in some sports and there are places that they cannot frequent. Sometimes they are not allowed to go somewhere by the fact they are female.

In Capeverdean society, girls and boys are expected to have different characteristics. Individuals who demonstrate characteristics that are considered inappropriate to their sex are teased by society. For example, if a girl acts as a boy she is considered to be manly, or if a boy has some characteristics that are expected from girls he will be called “mudjerinha”- a little woman. People use this name to hurt the boy, just because the boy is not behaving as they think the boy should behave. They use this name as an insult, because they think that a man having female characteristics is ugly, since women are weak. It is bad for a man to have weak characteristics and behaviors or he is a man who has no authority over anyone. It is expected that a man should have authority because, if not, he will be considered the one who every women can beat or command. Men are expected to prove that they are men. Generally, women with male characteristics are more acceptable than men with female characteristics.

Even in schools we can find the difference in the treatment of girls and boys. For example, materials are used that show that men and women should have different occupations such as women as house workers and men as electricians. These differences in treatment of girls and boys used in textbooks are influences brought from the others countries. Since most of the books used in our schools come from abroad. As teachers we should be aware of the existence of the difference in treatment and take this matter into account in the future. This can be done by preparing materials that do not stereotype the way a girl or a boy should behave or which occupations can be linked to men or women. To be prepared and to know which steps teachers should take to avoid the difference in treatment of girls and boys in schools, they need to know other agents in the society that teach these differences. These

differences are called “gender stereotypes”. In the next section the definition and the origins of gender stereotypes will be given.

## **2.4 Gender Stereotypes and Their Origins**

It is the society, that decides which characteristics are for men and which are for women. Men are expected to have great strength, to be aggressive. In contrast, women are expected to have less physical strength and unaggressive. If a man or a woman does not do what is imposed by the society, he or she is considered to be doing something inappropriate. The characteristics assigned by the society that men and women should behave differently are called gender stereotypes. Many aspects in society contribute to teaching gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes, “are rigid ideas about how males and females ‘typically’ behave” (Ormrod, 1998, p.173). It happens when boys and girls are taught that some behaviors are more appropriate for males and that others are more appropriate for females. Many stereotypical behaviors of gender come from parents, media, classmates, teachers, and schools where all have different expectations from girls and boys. These aspects are the main promoters of the gender stereotypes in the society. In this case the aspect school will be the most focused on. It is necessary to remember that all aspects mentioned below are referring to American society, but they may be applied to the Capeverdean society in some cases, since all the aspects mentioned influence our society.

### **2.4.1 Schools**

Unfortunately, schools are another agent that contributes to gender stereotypes in society. Ironically, in this system, students are being treated differently. Different career advice is given to girls and boys, based on different expectations toward students’ sex. Different occupations are offered to male and female students, which is wrong by linking different traits to female or male. Both of them should be encouraged to successfully achieve their academic goals and never be told that a specific career is only for girls or boys.

Research on the different ways boys and girls experience gender in school has sensitized educators, sociologists, and psychologists to some inequities (Sadker & Sadker 2000; Ormrod, 1988; Vandrick, 2000, Macionis, 1998). They found differences in the treatments of students in the schools. Girls and boys are being treated differently concerning their gender. For example teachers give girls less teaching attention than boys, expect them to have different academic success, and expect them to have different behavior and encourage girls and boys differently” (Ormrod,1988), p.179). Since educators, sociologists, and

psychologists are sensitized with this situation, we should begin to evaluate the situation and find solutions for teacher and teach them what they need to know to understand the student and the influence of gender. Because when teachers know and understand the problems they can better seek the solutions to help them to make an appropriate teaching in practice.

The sociologist John J. Macionis, in his book *Society: The Basics*, says that in American schools the curricula tend to offer different career advice to boys and girls, which for him contributes to gender segregation. According to Macionis, schools contribute to segregation because there are different majors linked to men and women. For example schools offer instructions for young women like: typing and home centered skills such as nutrition and sewing. For men, it is instruction in woodworking and auto mechanics. "Men are disproportionately represented in the natural sciences-including physics and chemistry, biology and math. Women cluster in the humanities (such as English) and social sciences including anthropology and sociology" (Macionis,1998, p.246).

The psychologists Ormrod, Borich & Tambory confirm what Macionis says about the Americans schools contribution to gender segregation, that schools promote the development of gender differences. In their book, *Educational Psychology: A Contemporary Approach*, Borich & Tambori (1995) name three types of stereotypes that they judge schools use to discriminate against students: "personality stereotypes, occupational stereotypes, and intellectual stereotypes" (p. 612). Personality stereotypes are the stereotypes used to describe women, such as gentleness, appreciativeness, weakness, and soft heartedness. For men, sometimes they are stereotyped when they are expected to be rough, aggressive strong, coarse, and rude. Another stereotype schools use is occupational stereotypes, when stereotypical professions are offered to boys and girls. Normally boys are given stereotypically masculine professions like mechanic, electrician, construction worker, high school math teacher, lawyer, dentist, or bank manager. While girls are expected to be housewives, nurses, social workers, elementary school teachers, dental assistants, secretaries, and bank tellers. The intellectual stereotype occurs when girls and boys are stereotyped according to their mental abilities. Girls and boys are believed to have different academic aptitudes to different subject areas. For example it is believed that girls do better at reading and boys do better at math and physics.

Concerning the intellectual stereotype, the psychologist Ormrod (1998), has shown that the idea that girls and boys have different academic ability is untrue. In his findings he claims, "with respect to academic abilities, boys and girls are probably more similar than you think" (p.174). Yet, he explains clearly that boys and girls are not different in the academic



abilities: “Boys and girls perform equally well in mathematics” (p. 174) Boys and girls were born to succeed in all areas. They were not born to succeed specifically in a determined area. Unfortunately, in schools they are taught that they can succeed in different areas.

#### **2.4.2 How School Perpetuates Stereotypes**

The two studies mentioned above not only show the areas in which males and females are stereotyped, but also, how these stereotypes are perpetuated in school. They show various practices of stereotypes they have found to exist in schools, such as: “teachers’ behaviors, peer behaviors” (Ormrod, 1988, p.178-179), “curriculum bias, academic differentiation and school staffing patterns” (Borich & Tambori, 1995, p.613-614). Teachers’ behaviors are the expectations that teachers have toward girls and boys. This leads to encouraging them differently. Peer behaviors are the behaviors that peers have toward their colleagues when they think that they are or are not in the gender appropriate subject. Curriculum bias happens when the materials group males or females in different occupations. Academic differentiation is the belief that there are different models of education for men and women. School staffing patterns refer to the way the body of the school is staffed, the number of female and male staff. These sources of stereotypes are discussed below.

#### **2.4.3 Curriculum Bias**

Curriculum bias happens when textbooks and other educational materials identify males or females with particular occupational roles. For example, females are directed to become nurses, housewives, and teachers. Males are directed to become police officers, electricians, car mechanics, etc. (Ormrod, 1988; Borich & Tambori 1995, p.613-614). Other researchers have found that textbooks have identified different occupational roles for males and females. Otlowksi (2003) conducted a study in a Japanese school where he found that textbooks contribute to gender bias in schools. He found that women are stereotyped in textbooks when they are given such roles as homemakers and mothers. If we examine the situation in Cape Verde, we find similar examples of gender bias and stereotypes in educational materials as in Japan. In Cape Verde women are always represented in textbooks as homemakers, child caretakers, kindergarten teachers, and secretaries. We should remember that almost all books come from the foreign countries, especially those in the foreign language. Since we bring books from outside we borrow values and cultural ideas from other countries, which consequently our students learn. Maybe this is the reason why gender stereotypes can be found in our textbooks.

#### **2.4.4 Academic Differentiation**

Males are expected to be more successful in math and chemistry, whereas, girls are expected to be more successful in the humanities. There are no special careers for girls or for boys. Girls and boys are similar in their academic abilities. However, the traditional orientations that influence students' career choices do exist. Ormrod (1998) calls this “‘gender appropriate behavior’, where students believe that there is appropriate models for their gender, for example ‘French is a girl thing’ or ‘mathematics is for men’” (p. 441). Girls and boys choose specific careers that they believe are “for women” or “for men”. For example, girls do not choose some careers they believe are “too masculine”, such as mathematics or physics. The same happens when boys do not take typing because it is a women’s skill or because most secretaries are women. We as instructors must help students to choose their career, explaining to them that there are no specific careers for girls or boys. However “traditional orientations” exist in society. Ormrod suggests to “expose students to successful models of both genders,” (p.441). If they are exposed to careers of both genders, there will be no different subject areas for girls or boys, but all can have academic aptitudes for all the subject areas. The psychologists Borich & Tambori (1995) give a helpful suggestion for teachers about this matter: that teachers should have ideas of how to teach without communicating gender stereotypes of occupations and subjects (p.617).

#### **2.4.5 Teachers’ Behaviors**

Ormrod (1988) and Borich & Tambori (1995) agree that teachers contribute (sometimes unconsciously) to the differential treatment of female learners. Ormrod (1998) reports “many elementary physical education teachers believe that boys are naturally more athletic than girls, they foster the physical development of boys more than that of girls” (p. 179). He agrees that teachers tend to encourage boys and girls differently when it concerns the choice of the subject area. “Teachers and guidance counselors more frequently encourage boys to pursue such subjects as science and mathematics; they are more likely to give girls missed messages about this subject or even to discourage girls from pursuing them” (p.179).

Teachers sometimes use stereotypes in classroom management. Teachers manage students differently depending on their sex. The example is given by Sadker and Sadker (2000), in their book, *Teachers, Schools and Societies*, where they say that “if asked whether they treat male and female equally, most teachers would probably respond: “of course, I do...if observed closely, however, many differences can be detected”. (p. 442). According to

them, teachers have different expectations from girls and boys. They expect boys to be active, aggressive, and good in math and science, while girls are expected to be cooperative, dependent, and good in reading and the language arts. They assign students to do different skills that are appropriate for boys and girls, such as when teachers ask boys to do tasks that require physical activity or mechanical skills, and girls to do those that are more sedentary such as grading papers. Also, the way teachers talk to male students is different from the way they talk to female students. Boys are punished more severely than girls and teachers engage them more than girls. “Teachers talk to them more, listen to them more and give them more active teaching attention. The reason is that boys are assertive in grabbing teacher’s attention; they are more likely than girls to call out the answers to the question” (p. 443-444). Surprisingly, Sadker and Sadker conclude that when teachers learn that in many classrooms boys get more from them than girls they express disbelief, “this certainly doesn’t apply to me. I direct questions to all of my students. I interact with them equally” (p. 443). From what Sadker and Sadker found, teachers unintentionally interact with students differently. Ormrod (1988) suggests teachers “try interacting frequently with all of our students, by helping them think through correct answers, by encouraging them to try harder when they experience difficulty, and by holding high expectations for everyone” (p. 179). If gender discrimination disappears in our classrooms surely it will diminish in our schools and society.

#### **2.4.6 Peer Behavior**

Playmates and classmates also help children learn to adhere to traditional gender stereotypes. They respond positively to students who are in “gender appropriate” subjects, and negatively to those who are in gender “inappropriate” subjects (Ormrod, 1988, p. 178). Students should choose the subjects they want independently of their classmates. They should think about what they want, what they dream of, and what they like, instead of thinking about others. This may be difficult for students, especially adolescents, but we as instructors can encourage students to think about themselves when making an academic choice.

#### **2.4.7 School Staffing**

Concerning school staffing patterns, the sociologists Borich & Tambori (1995), say that there are two principal concerns regarding how schools are staffed. First, “feminization of schooling”, the percentage of female teachers is greatest at the elementary school level. They say that because of this fact, boys experience more disciplinary and conduct problems in schools than girls. Second, is the “predominance of males as leaders, supervisors and bosses”

(p.615). They say “some educators believe that the under-representation of woman as administrators reinforces sex role stereotypes” (p.615). It would be helpful if school staffing were of mixed gender. For Capeverdean society this may also be true because we may have more female teachers in elementary schools than male teachers.

We can conclude that most of the studies analyzed above, found gender inequality in schools. Even though studies have been done on this issue, it still persists. All students should be treated and respected equally with no difference. All should benefit equally from teachers. Parents and professional educators have the responsibility of eradicating gender stereotypes in the society including the classroom. For professional educators, Chinn & Gollick do agree that it is their responsibility:

The role of teachers and other professional educators requires that they not limit the potential of any student because of gender or sexual preference. Classroom resources, extracurricular activities and counseling practices must be evaluated to ensure that students are not being discriminated against because of their gender (Shaw, 2000, p.133).

Fortunately, many studies have been done to benefit students in the classroom, regarding students and their gender but it is still a subject that needs to be seriously thought about from the educational point and society in general as well. In the next section there are presented some studies done to promote gender equality in the classroom.

## **2.5 Studies Done on Gender Equality in the Classroom.**

Many studies have been done to promote gender equality in the classroom. In their study, “A Meta-Analytic Perspective on Sex-Equality in the Classroom”, Jones & Dindia, (2004), examine if teachers’ interactions with students such as praising or blaming vary on the students sex. They found that teachers interact more with male students than with female students, “we found that male students are the main recipients of total interactions and negative interactions” (Jones & Dindia 2004, p. 458). Their findings suggest that “teachers do not praise boys more than girls” (p.454). Findings say that male students receive more teachers’ attention than girls do because they have more discipline problems than girls Ormrod (1988, p. 179).

Another study done on gender equality is “Accountability and Single-Sex Schooling: A Collision of Reform Agendas”, by Herr and Arms (2004). This study documents accountability of gender equality reform at one California public middle school serving low-income students of color. They researched how the single-sex experiment would affect teaching and learning, how teachers would face the gender reform, how their own beliefs

about gender might affect pedagogy, and if the single-sex experiment could further gender equality. They concluded that single-sex schools were “moving schools toward real equality” (Herr & Arms, 2004, p.552). According to the purpose of the study, its objective was to foster gender equality in schools. Single-sex schools are good because with that there might not exist difference in students’ participation in a classroom or in the school, no difference in treatment of girls and boys, no difference in teachers or students engagement.

A work by DeWitt (2001) about classroom participation gives another example of studies done about the gender issue in an individual case study. She conducted the case study in her classrooms. Her intention was to know how her behavior impacts participation from all students. She found that there was little difference between males and females in participation, 70% for girls and 60% for boys. Girls were participating almost the same as boys.

The above studies report important steps and suggestions that can contribute to gender equality in classrooms. They are important for making teachers aware of what happens in their classrooms and being able to accept them as helpful. There are many things that happen in a classroom. One of these is classroom participation. It is one of the elements that make the teaching and learning moments be tested. Class participation depends on many variables in the classroom, especially when it is concerning a foreign language. The next chapter will talk about some variables that influence class participation.

### **3. Class Participation**

This chapter will discuss findings on class participation. Class participation is a way to measure student's progress. It is important to evaluate how well students are doing in the learning process. It is fatal in many classes, including a foreign language classroom when students do not participate. Lee (2005) defines class participation as

The students speaking in class. When students are able to ask and make questions, make comments and participate in the class discussion. Students who don't have these requirements are considered to be lazy, passive and they normally are penalized when participation is graded (p.1).

Some experts say that class participation "is not just being there or saying something, but it is a process that students are encouraged to be actively engaged" (Beng, 2003, p. 1). For Beng, actively engaged means that "students should be able to ask questions, provide insights to support arguments, personal views, opinions, experiences, explore perspectives, clarify materials" (p.1). This engagement is important because Guthrie & Alverman cited in Craven & Hogan (2001), say that "meaningful language learning takes place when students are engaged, that is when students demonstrate interest, motivation and participation in this process of learning." (p. 37). But all these factors above mentioned depend on some variables pointed out below.

#### **3.1 Variables that Influence Student's Participation in the Classroom**

Studies on students' participation in classrooms, have addressed a number of variables such as student's gender, cultural background, personality, and age and the teacher's behavior, teacher's expectation, teacher's gender, students personality and students age, thought to have significant impact on the teaching /learning language. (Doe, 2000); (Dewitt, 2001; Lim, 2003; Le, 2000; Howard et al., 2006)

##### **3.1.1 Student Gender**

According to Chinn & Gollick as cited in Shaw (2000), the "influence of gender affects every aspect of ones' life" (p.22). This influence includes the way we learn language. Concerning the student's gender in classroom participation, the research has been mixed. Some studies have found that males participate more frequently than females. In her study, Doe (2000) surveyed two elementary schools and found out that boys participate more than girls. Others studies have found the opposite- that females participate more frequently than males (Dewitt, 2001).

### 3.1.2 Cultural Background

Cultural background is a variable that has an important relevance on the student's participation in the EFL classroom. Students have different behaviors in the classroom according to their culture. "Learners with different cultural backgrounds may have very different conceptions and beliefs about what the classroom should look like and what constitutes proper behavior in the classroom" (Le, 2000, p. 6). For example, in a study of the effectiveness of class discussion in Korean classrooms, it was found that there were some behaviors that students exhibit such as: being reserved, not speaking much in class, not expressing opinions. They also see teachers as authority figures in class, they expect to be called on by teachers and they have fear of making mistakes in class (Lim, 2003).

Another example is shown in a study done in Vietnamese classrooms to find out why Vietnamese students do not speak English in class and why they dislike expressing their point of view. Cultural aspects are the main causes because Vietnamese students are taught to view teachers as an authority of knowledge; this results in a "passive learning" (Le, 2000). Le suggests that teachers should implement strategies, which should increase student's participation and their ability to express their points of view. Le argues,

Regardless of how reserved students are, I believe that teachers of English can adopt various strategies to increase classroom participation and critical thinking... One strategy that can benefit language learning is taking a thoughtful approach to materials development. (2000, p. 6).

For him it can combat passive learning and make students participate in the classroom. For the Capeverdean learners, some of them see teachers as the one who knows everything, who cannot make mistakes, but most see the contrast, that teachers are those who are a helper, those who are in the classroom as a simple support. It is helpful for a classroom where students see teachers as help. Capeverdean teachers may have difficulties getting students to participate, since there are students who see teachers as authority figures, as in Vietnam and Korea.

### 3.1.3 Teachers' Behavior in the Learning Environment

Teachers' behavior is another variable that influences students' participation. According to Nunn in Howard et al (2006) instructors do play an important role in student participation. "It is clear that instructor behaviors can influence student traits like comprehension and interest and can influence class traits such as emotional climate and interaction norms" (p.16). Instructors' behavior has an important role in the students'

participation in the class. Teachers should be aware not to affect the students' participation with their behavior. An example is shown in Turula's (2002) study done in Poland. She investigated what happens in a foreign language classroom. She found out that the way teachers control the classroom, influences the way students feel in the classroom. Teachers who are strict and rigid, have students who feel isolated and at a loss of control in the classroom. The opposite, occurs with a teacher who creates a friendly learning environment of sharing and fun. In this condition, students feel more comfortable in the classroom. And consequently they engage better in the learning environment.

### **Teachers' Expectations**

Teachers' expectations are another factor that affects students' participation in the classroom. "Teachers' expectations refer to their attitudes about learners' potentials for academic success" (Armstrong et al, 2001, p.197). According to Armstrong et al, teachers expect different students to have different levels of achievement. It consequently makes teachers interact differently with students in the classroom. They interact with students according to their expectations. Learners are affected when they notice teachers' expectations. According to Hei and Sauman (1999), there are "differences in expectations of classroom behavior, attitudes... and relationship between instructors and students" (p. 1). These expectations may be negative or positive. For Ormrod, (1988) "such differential treatment is not necessarily a bad thing" (p.190). Yet, Ormrod argues that expectations can lead teachers to behave in a way he calls "self-fulfilling prophecy" that is when "what they expect students to achieve becomes what students actually do achieve" (p.190). What teachers should do is to expect equally of all students. If they do that the prophecies will be fulfilled positively.

#### **3.1.4 Instructor's Gender**

The instructor's gender is another variable that has been examined in relation to students' participation in the classroom. Some studies have found that students from both sexes participate better in a female taught class. "Observations of classroom behavior reveal that students participate more frequently in courses with female instructors" (Brooks, 2006, p. 16). To emphasize that the gender of the teachers matters in the students' participation, more examples can be given. Another finding revealed that female students participate better in a female taught class than in a male taught class. James & Tailor said, "Based on observations of actual classroom behaviors female students participated significantly more in female taught courses than in male taught courses" (Howard, 2006, p. 16). The gender of the instructor is



important as shown; it is a component that makes the difference in the rate of participation in English classrooms.

### **3.1.5 Students' Personality**

According to Brown (Lee, 2005, p.1), "personality is one of the important factors that are equally for explaining differential success among second language learners". In Lee (2005) study, "Students' Personality Type and Attitudes Toward Classroom Participation," she points out two types of personality, introversion and extroversion. "While extroversion is associated with risk-taking, introversion is subsumed under the concept of self-esteem" (Lee, 2005, p.1). She observed class discussion with 126 students in an American university. Her findings indicate no significant correlation between student personality type and participation. She found that introverted students had a higher rate of participation than extroverts. Teachers have this great challenge, to be able to engage both introverts and extroverts to make all have a high rate of participation.

### **3.1.6 Student's Age**

Another variable that we should take in account when referring to class participation is the age of the students. Students behave in the classroom according to their ages. Experts agree that the age of the students is an important factor that can be influenced by the student's way of learning the foreign language (Lim 2003). Specifically in the classroom students tend to be more active or less active according to their ages. Sauman & Hei (1999) found that in Japan beginners (students around 12-14 years) are more active participants in the classroom than advanced students (17-18 years). This is another variable that teachers deal with in the classroom. Teacher should guarantee a high rate of participation from students from all ages in the classroom.

## **3.2 Conclusion of the Literature Review**

In the first chapter gender was discussed. It was said that gender is defined according to culture, that it is the way each culture sees men and women. It was explained how the Capeverdean society defines men and women and how they expect men and women to behave. Gender stereotypes were explained as ideas that people have about how men and women should behave. It was said that schools are one of the origins of gender stereotypes. Also, it was pointed out that schools perpetuate gender stereotypes through curriculum bias, academic differentiation, teachers' behaviours, peers behaviours and school staffing. After

pointing out the ways schools promote gender stereotypes, studies that promote gender equality in the classroom were discussed. Those studies were mentioned in order to make teachers aware of what happens in the classroom and they are to be helpful for our classroom environments.

In chapter II, classroom participation and many variables that influence student's participation were evaluated such as: students' gender, students' cultural backgrounds, and teachers' behaviour in the learning environment, teachers' expectations, instructors' gender, students' personality, and students' age. The literature review was written in order to provide information to further develop the research question "what is the relationship between gender and students participation in EFL classroom". From what was found in the literature review, student's gender influences classroom participation. There are mixed findings about this issue. Some found that girls participate more than boys; others have found that boys participate more. But these issues will be addressed in the findings and analysis to see if there is any relationship between gender and classroom participation in Capeverdean high schools.

#### **IV. Methodology**

I conducted a literature review about studies involving gender participation in the classroom. Also I did field research to find out the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students towards gender and class participation, through questionnaires. In the questionnaire survey, teachers and students had to write the answers to a list of questions. I created this list of questions for teachers and students. I chose to use questionnaires as being the most appropriate for the population of teachers and students. According to their experiences they provided effective information that gave the answers to my question. Murray (2005) explains, “The survey questionnaire is considered one of the most appropriate and common methods for collecting data in second language research” (p. 51). Some of the reasons for the use of the survey questionnaires are that they are “easy to construct, extremely versatile and, uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable” (Murray, 2005, p.52). This is why questionnaire surveys are the best way to get at my data. Teachers and students had different lists of questions. From students I tried to find out why some participated and why others did not, what their perceptions are about girls’ and boys’ participation in their classrooms, and if they perceived that girls or boys do participate more in their classrooms. From teachers I wanted to know if they engage students differently, if they ask more questions to one gender over the other and if they expect students to behave differently. I also wanted to know if the perceptions they have from girls are different from boys in different classrooms.

I conducted my field research in Praia. First, I did observations in Liceu Domingos Ramos, then in Liceu Calabaceira where I informally observed classes, paying particular attention to how teachers respond to boys and girls to have additional information. The purpose was to get the answer to how girls and boys participate in classrooms. I also wanted to see if teachers engage them differently, or expect them to behave differently. Because I believed that when observing I would get something precious from that language classroom. I agree with Allwright (1988), where he defines this kind of observation as “systematic classroom observation” which is “a procedure looking for a purpose” (p. 239). My purpose was to find out the rate of girls and boys participation. He continues that it “is faith in the observable and the conviction that the route to the answers to our questions... lies primarily in the systematic study of the events of the language classroom” (Allwright, 1988, p. 239). Even though there are disadvantages that can be found in Allright’s concept because a student can behave differently, for many reasons. For example students may not participate because there

is someone strange such as an observer, in the classroom or because he or she was not feeling well.

A non-participant observation was part of my observation strategy. A “non-participant observation is a method of observation in which an investigator examines a group process without taking part in the group activities” (Doob, 1997, p. 38). This provided helpful information about the topic where I could be in touch with the field, being an observer who was attentive to what was happening. I also did some participant observations, where I took part in the group process. It made students behave differently. With my presence in the group of students, I tried to make them participate more. In the group work in which I participated, two students participated because I encouraged them, if I had not been there they would not have participated. Although girls were free to participate they normally did not hold back from participating. They had no problem being in the front or even in their places. The boys had little difficulty saying something related to what was being talked about in the classroom.

Since I intended to do the field research on students’ and teacher’s attitudes and perceptions, I used this data collection for the purpose of building the extensive information about their thoughts and behaviours concerning gender and class participation in Capeverdean EFL classroom.

I did a pilot experience with the questionnaire to explore how easy or difficult my questions were for students and teachers. I made questionnaires for teachers and students both in Portuguese, for better understanding of the language (for students). For teachers they should understand the language, but as the one for students was in Portuguese both questionnaires should be written in Portuguese for continuity. I asked eighteen questions for teachers and students. I surveyed five teachers and fourteen students in Domingos Ramos High School. Students from level 1 through level 6, and a variety of ages (from 13 to 17 years of age) participated. The objective was to see how well my questions could be understood by students from different ages and levels. In the body of the questionnaire there was a part where I asked both open-ended and closed questions. The most difficult part was where they had to write something and give examples. Some students did not do this part because they did not understand it. Some teachers did not receive the paper well because they said it had too many places to write. Some teachers took it and suggested putting less space for open-ended questions. With this experience, I could see that I had to change some questions where I had to put more options to choose instead of write and give examples thus giving more closed questions. To make it easier I decided to change the last four questions. For that, I had to ask questions in a more understandable way because I could see that it was difficult even

for teachers and for students as well. In this way I arrived at a better and friendlier questionnaire for my study.

After the pilot experience, I applied the true questionnaire. It was done in five high schools throughout Praia; Cesaltina Ramos Escola Tecnica, Liceu Constantino Semedo (Achada Sao Filipe), Liceu Conego Jacinto (Varzea), Liceu Domingos Ramos and Liceu Manuel Lopes (Calabaceira). I asked and was granted permission in each school before the application of the questionnaires (see appendix number 1). When granted the permission, I asked teachers for permission and I then conducted the questionnaire myself. For teachers, I gave them the questionnaire and they took them home and gave them to me on another day. It was difficult to get the teachers to do the questionnaires. A suggestion can be made to never give teachers questionnaires to take home, because they rarely or never bring them back. It is better to give them while sitting by their side and ask them to complete them. In this way no questionnaires will be lost. Another difficulty was encountered while doing the questionnaire. It was planned to apply the questionnaire in six high schools, but one of them (Amor de Deus) could not be used because it did not grant me the permission on time. I would like to suggest having one extra school to survey, if necessary.

## **V. Findings and Analysis**

This chapter will report the results and findings of the data collected in Praia from high schools with EFL teachers and students. All the questionnaires were entered into an Excel spreadsheet in order to quantify the answers of the girls, boys and teachers. The objective of the questionnaires was to get information from teachers and students about their opinions in order to answer the research question “what is the relationship between boys’ and girls’ participation in EFL classrooms?”

### **5.1 Description of the Schools**

The data was collected from five schools: Liceu Cesaltina Ramos (Escola Tecnica), Liceu Constantino Semedo (Achada Sao Filipe), Liceu Conego Jacinto (Varzea), Liceu Domingos Ramos and Liceu Manuel Lopes (Calabaceira). Each school was chosen because they have some characteristics that are interesting for this paper. The characteristics were taken from what people say about the schools. They are not formal characteristics but rather perceived characteristics. Mostly, I was interested in these schools because they are high schools and they have English teachers and English learners from a variety of social backgrounds and zones within Praia. The results were compiled to obtain an overall view of the way that teachers and students of Praia perceive participation in the classroom.

Below are the reasons why each high school was chosen. Cesaltina Ramos was chosen because it is a technical high school. The surveys from there help to understand the case of girls and boys who have interests for science and language. There is a stereotyped idea that girls tend to study language more and boys tend to study science. (Macionis, 1998, p. 246). Liceu Constantino Semedo was chosen because of its geographic situation, as it is located in a place where many students from different parts of the countryside come to study. They may have different thoughts about girls and boys in the classroom than of those who have a more urban experience. Even though these students are from the city they have a different experience from students from the other schools chosen. Specifically, they are far, from the center of the city, most of the students from that school come from the countryside. There is a difference in their perceptions and they are possibly more influenced by tradition. Liceu Conego Jacinto was chosen because it is a school that could be considered to be the school of the average experience in Praia. It is an old school, and it is located in a strategic place which makes it invite students from various parts of the city. The Liceu Domingos Ramos was chosen because it is said to be “the school of the rich” or the “school of the chic”. Students who study there are students who have a better economic situation. The Liceu Manuel Lopes

was chosen because it is a new school. The conditions there are better. Another reason it was chosen is because it was the first time that students were studying 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in that school giving them a unique experience since they have an appropriate language classroom. Their answers could be useful because they are unique, compared with the four schools chosen, with the best conditions to learn language. The five high schools were also chosen because they have students and teachers from different zones of Praia and offer when combined a clear picture of the overall experience of students in Praia.

## 5.2 Student Analysis

I collected 411 questionnaires, where 207 were girls and 184 were boys from different high schools. The students were from all six levels of English. From each school there were fifteen students from each level. Their ages are between 12 and 23 years old. All the information found was based on students' opinions of what happens in their EFL classrooms.

In order to see why students participate in EFL classrooms, question number eight consisted of the following statement "you participate in EFL classrooms" which was followed by eight options (see appendix number 2). The students chose one or more options to complete the statement. The options are below and they are followed with their respective analysis focusing on boys' and girls' answers. The answers of girls and boys are analyzed in a separate graph. **Graph 1** illustrates the girls' answers and **graph 2** shows the boys' answers. The graphs represent the percent of students' answers for each option.

Comparing the boys' and girls' answers referring to question number 8, which refers to the reason why students participate in class, it can be seen that the girls' and boys' answers are slightly different for all the options given. When compared, it can be seen that for the first option "you participate in EFL classrooms when you are called by the teacher", was the one that got the most percent of students answers. Girls answered with 19% and boys with 20%. According to this result both girls and boys participate in class when they are called upon by teachers. Both participate when called by teachers because our students normally do not like to speak if they are not called upon. It is what I had observed. Students wait until they are called to participate. If teachers ask for "volunteers" no one participates or one might say something. In the second option, the matter of volunteering will be analyzed more closely. This result shows that there is no real difference between girls and boys' participation. It is opposite from what Doe (2000) found. She surveyed two elementary schools in America and found out that boys participate more than girls.

The second option was “you participate in EFL classrooms voluntarily”. Even though the results were not noticeable; boys showed that they volunteer more than girls. Girls answered with 15% and boys answered with 17%. This result does not show what I observed in class. For what I observed girls volunteer more than boys to participate in class. The third option was “you participate in EFL classrooms because you know the answers”. This option got a considerable number of students’ answers when compared to the other options. 13% of boys and 17% of girls said that they participate because they know the answers. Here girls are showing that they participate more than boys when they know the answers. Here comes the fact that some students especially boys mentioned that sometimes they do not participate even when they know the answer, just to give a chance to those who participate less in the classroom. The fourth option was “you participate in EFL classrooms because the subject matter interests you”. The number of girls who said that they participate because the subject matter interests them is the same as boys. Girls responded with 17% and boys with 16%. Both girls and boys, participate in the same amount because the subject matter interests them. Students need to be given motives to be interested in the subject matter. Teachers have to present the subject matter in an enjoyable way for students to be interested in it and participate in class.

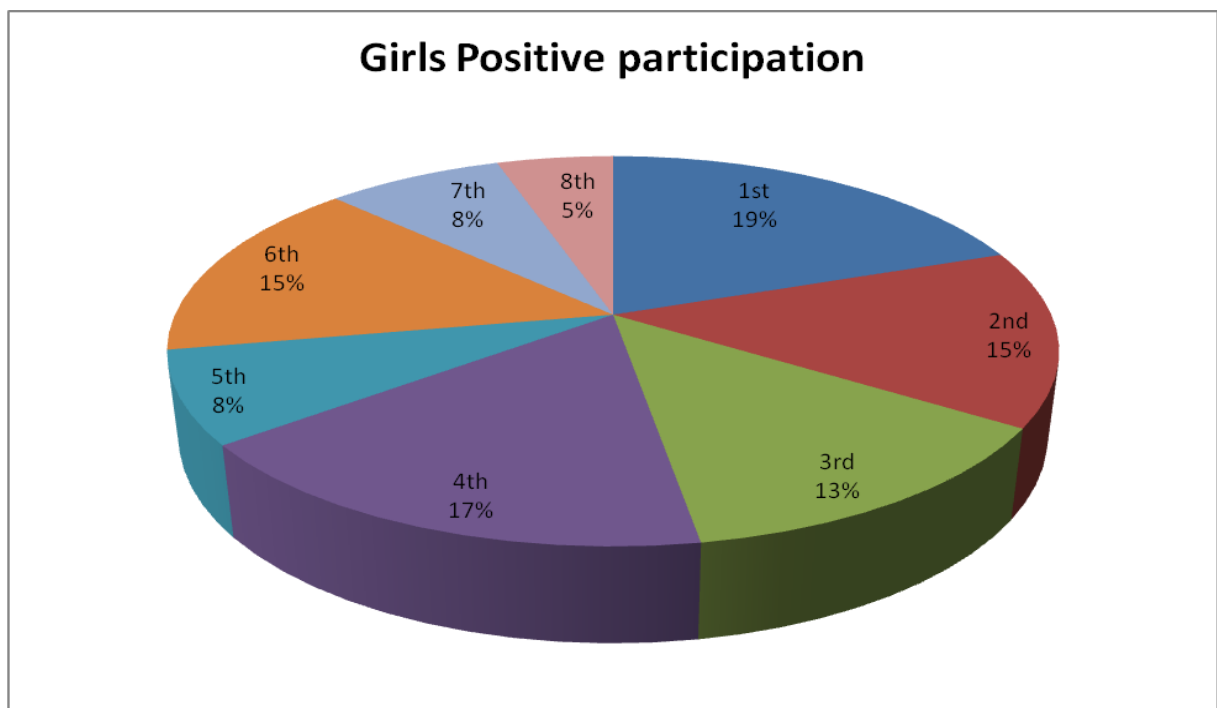
The fifth option read “you participate in EFL classrooms because you feel free to participate in front of your colleagues and teachers”. The statistics showed that girls feel as comfortable as boys to participate in classrooms. 8% from both sexes said they feel free to participate in front of their colleagues and teachers. It means that there is no difference between girls and boys in participation because they do not feel free. This was a surprising, but good result. It was expected that girls feel less free than boys to participate in class.

The sixth option was “you participate in EFL classrooms because you try to give the answer even if it is wrong”. For this option girls and boys showed that they are in the same level of trying to give the answers. Girls answered with 15% and boys answered with 13%. Here is the proof of the third option where the results showed that girls and boys do not participate because they do not know the answer .

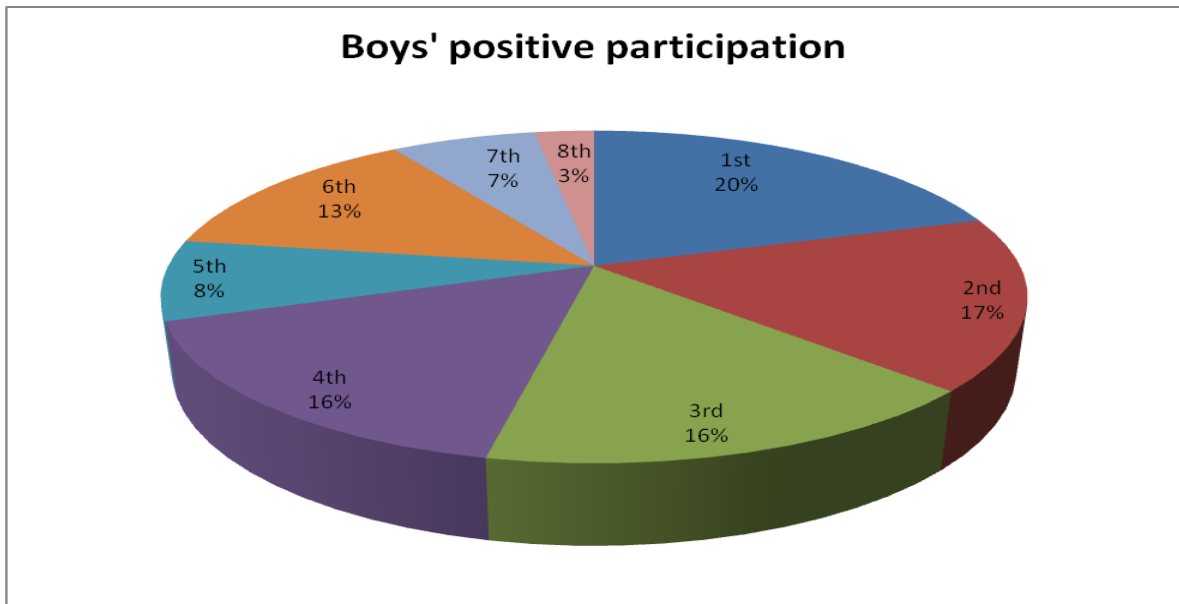
The seventh option was “you participate in EFL classrooms because you are not afraid of the teacher getting mad at you if make mistakes”. For this option there was no difference between the number of girls and boys. 8% of girls and 7% of boys said that they are not afraid of teachers. This result is showing that both girls and boys have the same way of seeing teachers in class. The eighth option was “other,” leaving the response open-ended. Here students could mention other options that make them participate which were not part of the



questionnaire. The girls' and boys' answers for this question were based in different areas. Girls, mostly, focused on their internal interests. They said that they like English, it is their favorite subject and that they like their English teachers. Here girls are expressing what Torula(2000) called introversial. In contrast, boys focused on their external interrests. the external interrest "extroversial students".Students mentioned that they participate because they need to speak English and it is useful for them to learn that language. That is why they participate in EFL classrooms. Girls and boys seemed to participate in EFL classrooms toward different goals. But students should know that they are in the classroom to learn English because they need it, not just because they like the language or their teachers.

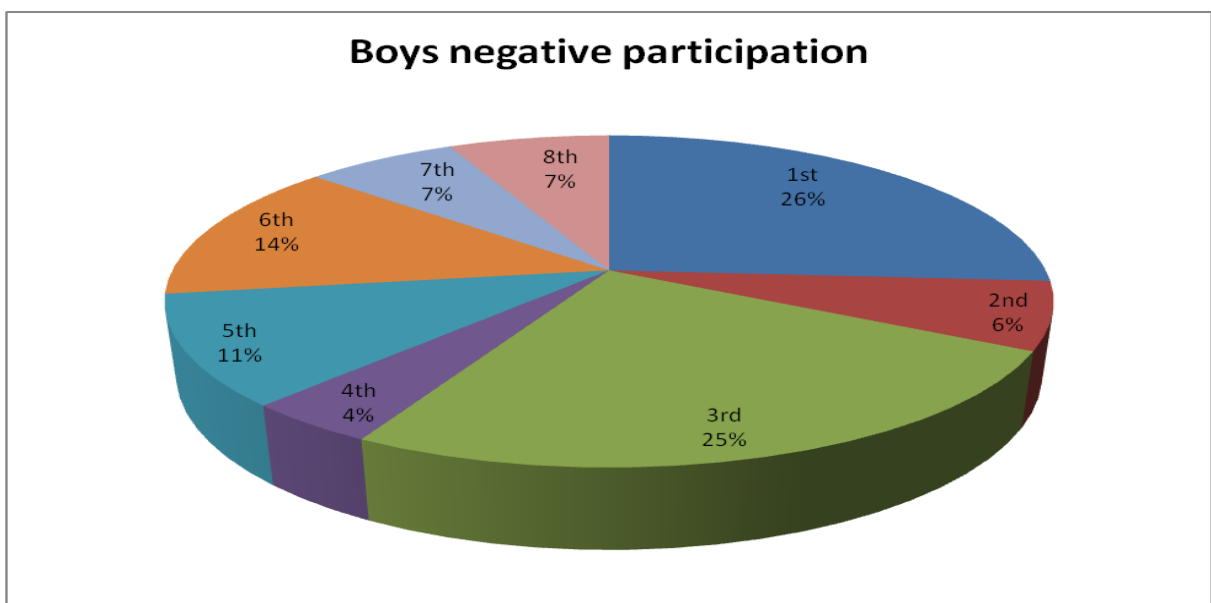


**Graph 1:** Girls Positive Participation

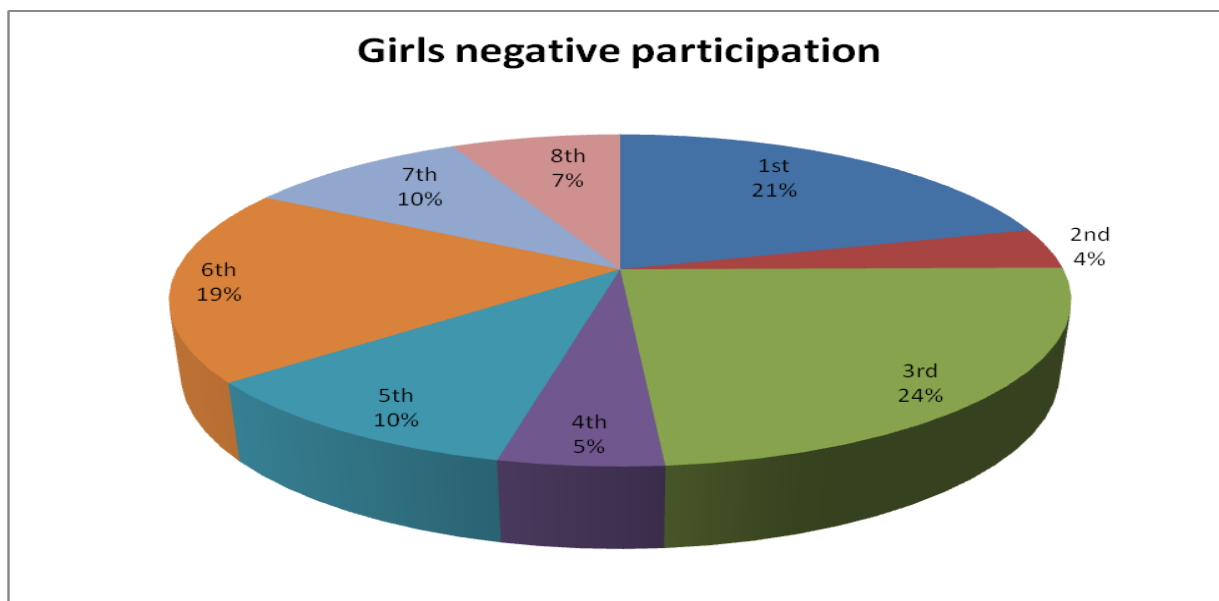


**Graph 2** Boys' Positive Participation

It was asked if “you participate in EFL classrooms”, in question number 8, similarly, I asked the question if “you do not participate in EFL classrooms” (see appendix - question number 9). I decided to ask the positive and the negative sides of the participation to better analyse the students’ answers. It would give more credibility to their answers. That is why the two sides of participation were examined. The results can be seen below in **graphs 3** and **4**. The two graphs represent boys’ and girls’ analysis of their answers respectively. They were given many options where they had to say why they do not participate in class.



**Graph 3-** Boys Negative Participation.



**Graph 4- Girls Negative Participation**

The first option for question number 9 was “you do not participate when you are not called upon.” According to the graphs, the number of girls is not so different from the number of boys. The results show that girls and boys have similar percentages, girls 21%, and boys 26%. This means that girls and boys almost equally wait for teachers to call them. Sadker and Sadker (2000) said that teachers call on boys more than girls (p.179). The next option will show how students deal with this question of volunteering to participate.

The second option was “you do not participate because you do not like to volunteer.” Here the number of boys and girls are not very different, where 6% are boys and 4% are girls. It can be said that students volunteer because few percent said do not participate. Even though, there is little difference, the number is saying that girls volunteer more than boys to participate in the EFL classrooms. This result is different with what occurs in America, for example. In America, it says that boys volunteer more than girls.

The third option was “you do not participate because you do not know the answers”. An amount of students said that they do not participate because they do not know the answers. Boys are slightly more likely than girls not to participate when they do not know the answer with 24% of girls and 25% of boys responding. This is showing that boys are more likely to participate when they know the answers, if they are unsure of their answers they do not participate. That is why in question number 8, in the seventh option it was found that girls try answers more than boys.

For the fourth option “you do not participate because the subject matter does not interest you,”. Girls and boys showed that they do not participate when the subject does not interest them. Girls answered with 5% and boys with 4%. It means that 95% girls and 96% of boys participate because the subject matter interests them. According to this result boys and girls have the same rate of interest for the English language. Here the stereotypical idea that girls study language more than boys does not apply. It can be seen that both girls and boys have interest for the language.

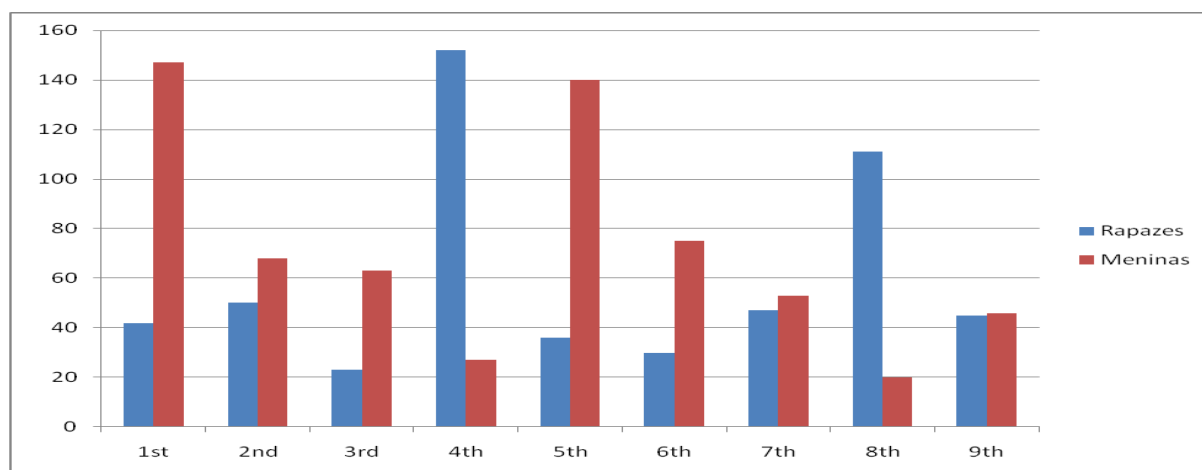
The fifth option was “you do not participate because you are shy, you do not feel free to speak in front of your colleagues and teachers.” The number of girls (10%) who said they are shy and do not feel free is marginally less than boys (11%). The findings show that what happens in our classrooms is not what the experts say about boys and girls and shyness. For this matter Vandrick (2000) says that girls are more shy than boys to participate in the classroom. Girls feel less free to participate in EFL classrooms than boys. The conclusion that can be made is that what happens in our classrooms is not what Vandrick found out concerning whether students are shy or not. For the Cape Verdean context it can be seen that for girls and boys there is no difference in respect to shyness. It means that in our classrooms the shyness is not the motive for difference in girls and boys participation.

The sixth option was “you do not participate because you are ashamed of making mistakes when you speak.” 19% of girls said that they are ashamed. This percentage is more than boys’ which is 14%. This result is supporting what studies found about students’ shyness and their making of mistakes. It says that girls are usually more shy than boys when it comes to making mistakes in the foreign language (Vandrick, 2000) .

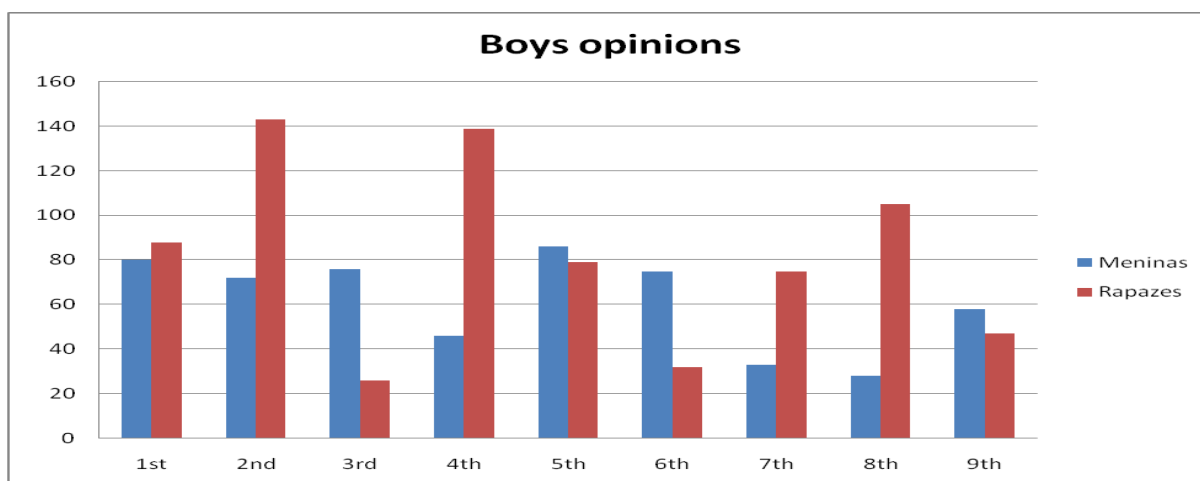
The seventh option reads “you do not participate because you are afraid of the teacher getting mad at you if you give a wrong answer”. The percentage of boys (7%), is less than girls (10%) who said that they are afraid. This result is because of the fact that male students often have discipline problem and they are not afraid of the teachers. The contrast happens with girls they usually do not have discipline problems and are afraid of teachers getting mad of them. Here the influence of gender roles in the Cape Verdean context can be seen. Girls are seen as weaker and boys are seen as stronger. Another fact is that in Cape Verde some see teachers as authority, it make students afraid of participating in class. As Lim (2003) found that Korean students do not participate because they see teachers as authority figure and it make them afraid to participate in class. This could explain why this percentage of students participates less.

The last option “others” shows less difference between the percentage of girls and boys who wrote. Both girls and boys almost wrote for the same reasons. Boys mentioned the difficulty for them to learn English: “it is useless to participate in EFL classrooms, I don’t understand anything”. Another thing boys mentioned was when they are having a bad day. Girls mentioned the same point, that sometimes they do not participate when they are not feeling well. They also mentioned when they are mad with something, or someone; “it hurts me when the teacher calls upon another student to answer the question that I volunteered to answer”. Here girls are showing that they volunteer and that they get mad if teachers call on other students to answer. But many girls said that they sometimes do not participate just to give the opportunity to other students who have a lower level of participation in the classroom. This gesture shows the characteristics that girls exhibit which is being cooperative. This gesture I could observe when a brilliant student (girl) had to stop talking to give opportunity for a boy who usually does not participate. This point is quite difficult because here the girl decides not to participate to give other colleagues an opportunity.

The question I asked in order to see if teachers engage students differently was based in students’ opinion. (See appendix question number 10). To analyze this question it was divided and made into two graphs one with girls’ opinion, **graph 5**, and another with the boys’ opinion, **graph 6** (see appendix number 4, for percentages).



**Graph 5:** Girls’ Opinion



**Graph 6: Boys Opinion**

The two graphs show the results of students' opinion. In the 1<sup>st</sup> line of question number 10, "who do you think participates more in the English classroom?" the results were different from girls and boys. In girls' opinion, girls participate more and in boys' opinion, boys participate more. In girls' opinion, 23% of girls said that girls participate more. In boys' opinion, 14% said that girls participate more. Even though there is a difference and the difference is favoring each gender, it can be seen that the percent of girls is more than the percent of boys in the participation in the classroom. Ormrod says that in America for example boys do participate more than girls in the classroom. The opposite happens in the Cape Verdean classrooms, as this result is showing, that girls participate more than boys.

Concerning the 2<sup>nd</sup> line "who do teachers motivate more to participate in EFL classrooms," again the two graphs show a difference in the results. For girls, teachers motivate more boys and for boys, teachers motivate more girls. 11% of girls said that for them teachers motivate more girls than boys. The other 89% think that teachers motivate more boys. For boys, 20% said that teachers motivate more boys than girls to participate in the classroom. The remaining 80% said that for them teachers motivate more girls to participate in the classroom. It can be seen that the percentage of students who said that teachers motivate boys to participate more, is more than those who said that teachers motivate more girls to participate. This means that results are biased depending on the students' gender.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> line "to whom does the teacher give more attention in the EFL classroom?" In both girls' and boys' opinion students said that teachers give more attention to girls. 14% of boys said that teachers give more attention to girls and only 4% of boys said that teachers give more attention to boys. In girls' opinion there is a significant percentage of girls who said that teachers give more attention to girls (10%), while only 4% said that teachers give more attention to boys. In this point the result is clear that in EFL classrooms, teachers give

more attention to girls in the classrooms. This result is in contrast with what the literature says. It says that teachers tend to give more attention to boys than to girls because the boys have more discipline problem than the girls and this makes teachers be more involved with boys than girls. Teachers give more attention to girls because girls are more attentive; they grab more teachers' attention than boys. The 4<sup>th</sup> line read "who disturbs more in the classroom?" Both genders' agreed that those who most disturb the EFL classrooms are boys. 28 % of girls said that boys disturb the class more, and only 4% percent said that girls disturb the classroom more. The same was found for boys, for them they disturb the classroom more than girls, 19 % said boys disturb more and 8 % said that girls disturb more. Relating this result to what the experts say they are exactly the same. Expert say that boys have more discipline problems than girls do. Boys disturb the class, then they are sent out, they do pay attention and this makes them be called attention all the times. And this gives boys more indiscipline in class, Ormrod (1988).

The results from the 5<sup>th</sup> line, "who asks more questions in EFL classrooms?" illustrates no major difference in the results based on girls' and boys' perceptions. For girls and boys, girls ask more questions than boys in EFL classrooms. 22% of girls think that girls ask more questions. And 16% of boys said that girls ask more questions. The result shows that girls ask more questions in EFL classrooms than boys do as perceived by students. Traditionally, girls are expected to talk more than boys. This is the reason that they ask questions more than boys. This result is similar to what Ormrod (1988), said that girls ask more questions than boys do.

The 6<sup>th</sup> line which had the question "whom does the teacher help more to answer oral questions?" The result is different. For girls, teachers help boys more, but for boys, teachers help girls more. 12% of girls said that teachers help girls more. 14% of boys said that teachers help more girls. It is clear that teachers help more girls to answer oral questions. The studies done in America, for example say the same that teachers tend to help girls more than boys to answer questions by giving them more clues and giving them more time to answer the questions. Ormrod (1988)

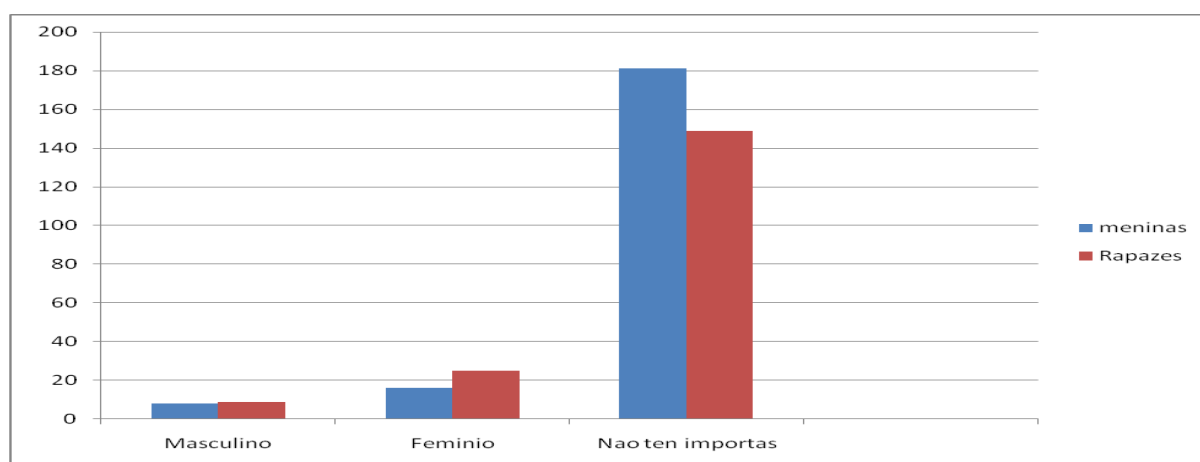
The 7<sup>th</sup> line "to whom do teachers ask the most difficult questions?", students focused on themselves. Girls said to girls and boys said to boys. 8% of girls said that teachers ask most difficult questions to girls and 9% said to boys. 10% of boys said that teachers ask most difficult questions to boys and 6% said to girls.

The 8<sup>th</sup> line asked "whom does the teacher punish more?" Both male and female students said that teachers punish more boys. 14% of boys said that teachers punish more boys and a significant number of girls also said boys are more punished (21%). This is the

proof that in our EFL classrooms, boys have more discipline problems, or at least they are perceived as being the cause of most discipline problems because they disturb the class. They joke with colleagues when making mistakes. This converts many times into undisciplined actions.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> line it was found different results concerning girls' and boys' opinion about what happens in the classroom. Students centered on themselves to answer the questions. Girls and boys seemed to beneficiate themselves and penalized the opposite sex. In the next group of question students did not center on themselves.

Another group of questions I asked to see if the students care about the teachers' gender and if it influences their willingness to participate in the classroom (see appendix number 2- question number 10). As shown in **graph 7**, (for more detailed information of the percentage see appendix number 4) the result shows us that students mainly do not care about teachers' gender to participate in the classroom. The percentage of girls 88% and the percentage of boys is 81%. There is little difference between girls and boys who care about teachers' gender to participate in the class. Only a few percent of students said that they would participate more if teachers were male or female. 4% of girls and 5% of boys said that they would participate more if teacher were female. 8% of girls and 14% of boys said that they would participate more if the teacher were male. It can be seen that there are more boys than girls who care if the teacher was female. It seems that boys would feel more comfortable in class with a male teacher.

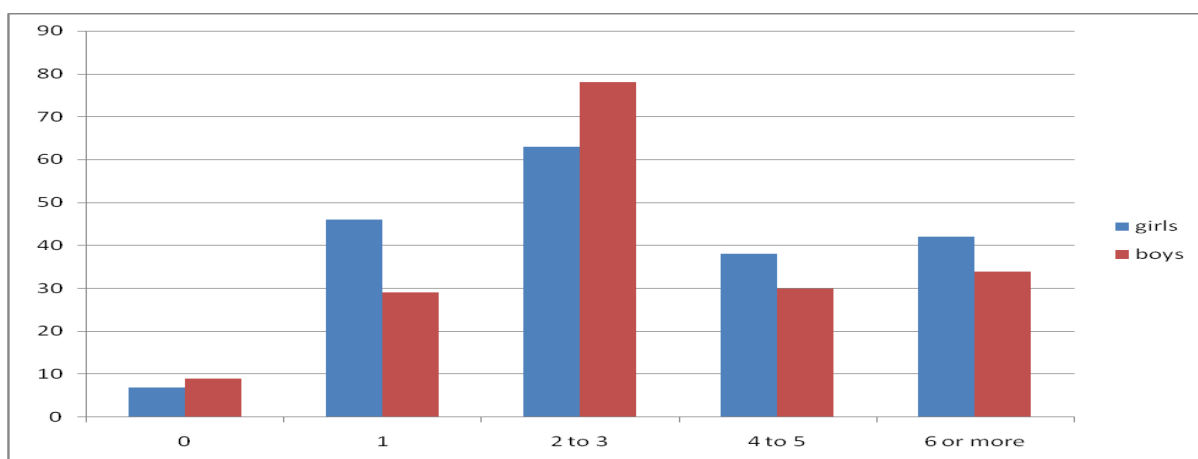


**Graph n° 7:** Girls and Boys Opinion about Teachers' Gender on their Participation

Another question asked was to see the average of students' participation per day (question number 11). The results show that the main part of students participate two to three times a day, (the results in percentages are in the appendix number 6). The number of girls



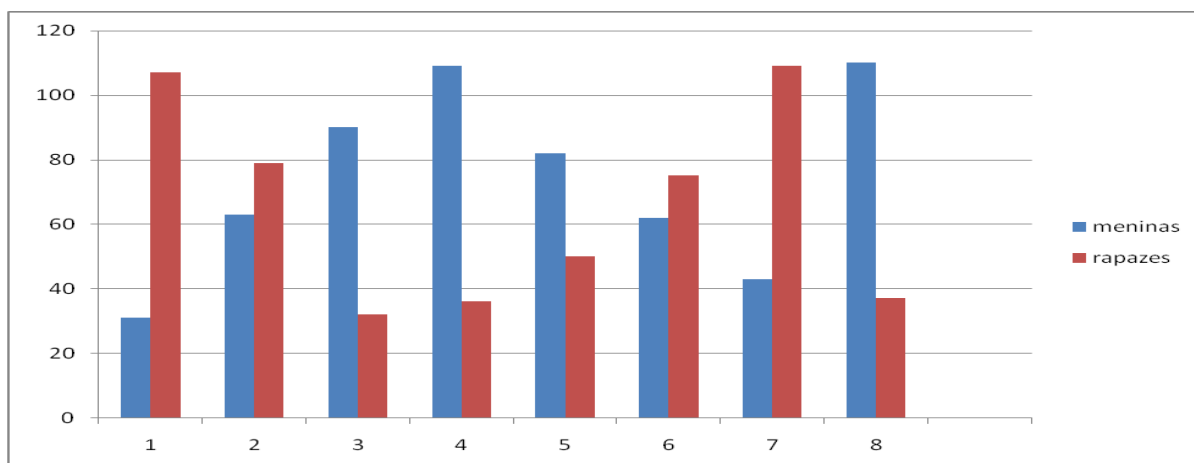
who are in this group is less than boys, 32% and 43% respectively. The number of girls who said that they participate six or more times in the classroom is more than the number of boys. 21% of girls and 19% of boys are in the group of participation 6 or more times a day. The percentage of girls who said they do not participate in the classroom is less than boys. 5% of boys and 4% of girls said that they do not participate in the classroom. There are a significant number of girls and boys who said that they participate once a day. The number of girls is more than the number of boys. 24% of girls and 16% of boys participate once a day. The average of students who participate four to five times a day is not very different, 19% for girls and 17% for boys. There are more girls who participate six or more times, and less girls than boys who said they do not participate in the classroom. This shows that girls have better participation than boys.



**Graph 8: Girls' and Boys' Average of Participation per Day**

In order to see what are the characteristics of boys and girls as perceived by students in the classroom, and how they think about boys and girls I asked question number 12. I mentioned many characteristics for them to match to girls and boys or both. It should be noted that these perceptions may be nothing more than a measure of the students stereotypes as already developed in Cape Verdean society.

The following graph (9) shows how students characterize and perceive each other in the classroom. (See appendix 7, for the percentages of girls' and boys' characteristics);



**Graph 9:** Students' Characteristics.

Analyzing the graph about students' characteristics it can be seen that mainly boys are considered to be more aggressive than girls. 29% of girls said that boys are aggressive and 20% of boys said that boys are aggressive. The result shows that mainly boys are perceived as aggressive. Few students said that girls are aggressive. This result shows what Chinn and Gollnick (2006) said that normally boys are expected to be aggressive. For the characteristic active, boys were considered to be more active than girls. 16% of girls and 15% of girls said that boys are active. In the classroom students considered girls to be more attentive than boys. 20% of girls and 15% of boys said that girls are more attentive. This result is significant. It means that in our classrooms girls grab more teachers' attention than boys.

Students considered girls to be calmer than boys. 19% of girls said that girls are calmer. In boys' opinion, 18% of boys said that girls are considered to be calmer. It shows that girls have more chance to be participating. Being calm helps them to participate. The characteristic cooperative was most matched to girls. 13% of girls and 14% of boys said that girls are cooperative. Ormrod (2000) said that girls are more cooperative than boys. Girls being more cooperative means that they help more in the classroom in respect to not disturb their colleagues when participating.

In the classroom, students considered boys to be more dependent than girls. Girls answered with 17% and boys answered with 11%. It can be seen that students considered boys more dependent than girls in the classroom. This result shows the contrast of what Ormrod said that girls normally are expected to be more dependent than boys.

Boys were considered to be disruptive. Few students considered that girls are disruptive, girls (2%) and boys 7%. The rest considered that boys are disruptive. This is one more proof that boys are the main focus of discipline problems in the classroom. Boys are more

disruptive because they know that this is what they are expected to be in class. It is the way the classroom expects them to act. As they are expected to be more disruptive than girls they do so in class.

Girls were considered more responsible than boys. A significant number of students said that girls are responsible. 20% of girls and 19% of boys said that girls are responsible. Few students considered that boys are responsible. The result makes us see that girls are considered to be more responsible than boys. It is another proof that girls participate more than boys. If they are more responsible they pay attention more, they do less noisy in class and consequently they participate more.

Experts have amount of explanation concerning the characteristics analyzed above. They say that girls and boys are characterized according to their culture. In each culture girls and boys are expected to behave differently (Herr and Arms 2004). The results above presented show us how the Cape Verdean students are characterized, specifically in the classroom.

The last question of the questionnaire (question 13) was “what would make you participate more in the EFL classroom?” It was an open-ended question. This question was asked to get students’ idea about their participation. Here students would write freely. Students from different levels had different answers. Students from levels one to three talked about students’ disturbance, students joking when they make mistakes. They said that they would participate more if their colleagues were less noisy in the classroom, and let them pay attention to understand the teachers’ questions. Another thing that is a barrier for them is their colleagues joking when they make mistakes. Students said that they would participate better in the EFL classroom if their colleagues did not joke with them when they pronounced words incorrectly or misread sentences in the foreign language. They said that when students laugh at them when they make mistakes they feel ashamed and less encouraged participating in other opportunities.

The other three levels (from four to six) talked more about lack of speaking in the classroom and many uses of grammar. Students said that they would participate more if they were fluent. They stated that they would be motivated to participate in the classroom if they used activities that would promote more speaking in the classroom. Many said “we do not have the practice of speaking, which would help us to say something in English, to have a good discussion, sometimes I do not participate in discussions or debates because I have difficulty speaking, I would participate more if I spoke fluently”. Also, students from these levels said that they would participate more if teachers were more patient with them, if

teachers were more relaxed, and gave them more encouragement to participate, because they said that teachers normally get mad with them when they make mistakes.

The main problem pointed by students is the colleagues' disturbance, students joking; lack of practice of speaking and that teacher get mad with them when they make mistakes.

### **5.3 Teacher's Analysis**

There were twenty teachers surveyed throughout the various high schools in Praia in which the surveys were conducted with students. The number of teachers surveyed is enough for the number of students surveyed. There were four teachers surveyed per school, which is approximately a third or a fourth of teachers of English in public schools throughout Praia. For teachers, results will be presented in tables to show the results since it is a smaller number of questionnaires. The table represents each question of the questionnaire for teachers and their respective answers.

The following tables (Table #1 and Table #2) represent the teachers' answers from question number four. In line A, teachers were asked in their opinion "who participates more in the classroom girls or boys" For their answer girls participate more than boys because 75% of teachers said that girls participate more and just 15% said that boys participate more. This result shows that girls participate more than boys. Girls participate more because teachers expect more from them, they are more engaged and they are more attentive than boys. The girls may study more because they are not allowed to go out, They stay in the house, which gives them more opportunity to study. In contrast, boys study less because they go out, they are free to go wherever they want and consequently, it does not give them as much chance to study. Cape Verdean gender roles encourage girls to stay at home and do the housework but boys should go out. The reason why girls participate more may be because of Caper Verdean gender roles. This result shows the opposite of what Vandrick (2000) said that girls are less likely than boys to participate in the classroom than boys.

When teachers were asked "who volunteers more to participate in the classroom" (line B), they answered that girls volunteer more than boys. 70% of teachers said that girls volunteer more and 20% said that boys volunteer more. Girls volunteer more because they know the answers; because they are sure about their answers, they are more attentive and they are not afraid of sharing them with the class. This result does not seem to be what happens in America, for example Sadker and Sadker (2000) said that boys volunteer more than girls to participate in American classrooms. In American classrooms boys volunteer more because teachers engage them more and encourage them more to participate in class.

The next question, number four, line C, teachers were asked “who asks more questions in the EFL classroom”. According to teachers’ answers’, boys ask more questions than girls. The number of teachers who said that boys ask more questions than girls is 65%, more than the number of teachers who said that girls ask more questions, 25%. Comparing this response to the students’ answers, it does not match what students said about this matter. Students said that girls ask more questions and teachers said that boys ask more questions. This difference in the teachers and students results, come from the fact that teachers and students do not have the same perception of the classroom environment. Teachers have the habit of asking questions. Teachers said that boys ask more questions because they pay less attention than girls, and they always have doubts if they do not pay attention. This is one reason why they may ask more questions in class. Students said that girls ask questions more just because girls participate more than boys. When girls ask questions they just want to clarify things instead of asking more weighty questions about material.

The next part of question four, line D, “who disturbs the classroom more”, gave the answer that boys disturb the classroom more than girls. According to teachers’ answers there is no doubt that boys disturb the classroom more than girls. 95% of teachers said that boys disturb the classroom more. None teacher said that girls disturb the classroom more than boys. This result shows the same with what Ormrod (1998, p. 179) said, that boys disturb the classroom more than girls and that boys have more discipline problem in class than girls. Boys disturb the classroom more than girls because boys are raised in a society where boys are freer to do what they want than girls. This freedom makes boys have more indiscipline, gives boys more chance to disrespect teachers and students and disturb the class. Teachers should get all students involved in the class participation for example when boys are disturbing keeping asking them questions it will make them pay attention and not disturb.

For the next question line E, “with whom do you take more time to control the classroom?” Teachers answered that they take more time with boys than with girls. There is a significant difference between the teachers’ opinions about girls and boys. The percent showed us that teachers take more time with boys to control the classroom than girls. 75% said they spend more time with boys only 15% said girls. This result complements the reason given in the previous question, that boys have more discipline problems than girls. Boys disturb more and they make teachers taking more time with them to control both the class and time.

**Table 1-** Teachers Opinion About Girls and Boys in the Classroom.

Question n° 4	Teachers answers in %					Total # of teachers = 20
A) Who participates more in EFL classroom	Boys		Girls		Invalid	20
	3	15%	15	75%	2	20
B) Who more volunteer to participate in EFL classroom?	4	20%	14	70%	2	20
C) Who asks more questions in EFL classrooms	13	65%	5	25%	2	20
D) Who disturbs more the classroom	19	95%	0	0%	1	20
E) With Whom you take more time to control the classroom?	15	75%	3	15%	2	20

Table number two still refers to the question number four. It relates to teachers' opinions about girls' and boys' average of participation per day. According to the results, teachers who said that girls have a higher average of participation are more than those who said that boys have a higher average of participation. 65% of teachers said that boys number two to three times of participation per day. For girls, 85% said that girls are in the four to five times of participation per day. The number shows us that girls participate more than boys per day. This result confirms the question #4 part A, where it was found that girls participate more than boys.

**Table n° 2-** Teachers Opinion About Girls and Boys Average of Participation Per Day

Cont. question n°4	Teachers Answers in %										Total # of teachers
	0		1		2-3		4-5		6 or more		
F) What is the average number of times boys participate?	—	—	—	—	15	65%	4	20%	1	5%	= 20
G) What is the average number of times girls participate?	—	-	-	-	-	-	17	85%	2	10%	

Students' class participation depends on many factors and one of these factors is teachers' expectation. In order to see if in our classrooms the teachers' expectation influences our students' participation, it was asked the question number seven. The table number 4 represents question number seven. It was asked in order to see the teachers' expectations toward girls and boys participation. It is clear that teachers expect more girls than boys to participate in the classroom. 80% of teachers said that they expect girls to participate more and 15% of teachers said that they expect more boys to participate in the classroom. This result is opposite with what Sadker and Sadker (2000) said about teachers expectation on boys and girls in America. He said that teachers expect more from boys than from girls. This result is one more proof why girls participate more than boys (referring to the question n° 4, line A). Since teachers expect them to participate they do participate more. But teachers should expect all students to participate giving all opportunity to participate in class.

**Table 3:** Teachers Expectations Toward Girls and Boys Participation

Question n° 7	Teachers Answers in %					Total # of teachers
	More girls		More boys		Invalid	
What is your expectation toward students' participation?	16	80%	3	15%	1	= 20

The question number seven is evidence that teachers do not treat girls and boys the same, but when asked the question number five teachers said that they treat girls and boys the same.

Analyzing question # 5, where teachers were asked if they think that students are treated differently according to their gender, all the teachers surveyed answered that they do treat students based on their gender. Some even said that they never thought about the matter before. They said that they think that they treat them the same. But if analyzed closely it can be seen that teachers do not treat girls and boys the same. The results showed that they expect more girls than boys to participate in class. This is proof that they do not treat students the same. Sadker and Sadker (2000) said that teachers unconsciously do not treat girls and boys the same, because when they are asked if they treat students the same they say "of course I do". When analyzed, the results show that they do not. EFL teachers should notice what happens in the classrooms to treat all students the same because all students are in class to successfully learn the language. To be successful they have to participate.

When teachers were asked question # 6 to see if they praise students differently according to their gender they mostly answered that they tend to praise boys more than girls

because the boys participate less. Praising them more gives them more motivation to participate, in their opinion. But the answers seemed to be ambiguous, because if they expect more girls to participate, they do not praise boys more. Even though they tend to praise boys more, girls participate more. This is one more piece of evidence that teachers treat students differently. The praising should be given to all students in the classroom, not only for those who do not participate.

For question # 8, teachers said that girls are more interested and sincere when they work in the classroom and that girls participate more. When they participate they are more detailed and complete in their answers. In contrast, boys participate less, they joke more than girls, and they normally are shorter and more concise.

For question # 9, “if the presence of boys affects girls presence in the classroom” and vice- versa, the teachers’ answers were mixed. Some mentioned that one gender complements another in the classroom concerning their participation. Others said that both genders influence each other. For those who said that one complements another they referred to the competition in participation that occurs between the two genders. For those who said that both genders influence one another they referred to disturbance and the fact that jokes happen in the classroom environment concerning the participation. They said that because girls participate more, boys tend to disturb girls when they participate. Boys try to discouraged girls when they participate, joking if they make mistakes in the language. Boys do this kind of joking simply because they live in a society where they are considered to be superior, and they think that girls can never do better. That is why their goal in this point is to put girls down and feel discouraged to participate. Teachers need to help students overcome this idea by advising students that there is no superior in the class but all are the same and all should be respected when talking.

The following table reports the teachers’ answers about the girls and boys’ characteristics in the classroom.



**Table # 3** Teachers Opinion About Students Characteristics

Chracteristics	Teachers Answer in %					Total # of Teachers = 20
	Boys		Girls		Invalid	
Aggressive	18	90%	0	0%	2	
Active	2	20%	16	80%	2	
Attentive	0	0%	17	85%	3	
Calm	2	20%	16	80%	2	
Cooperative	0	0%	15	75%	5	
Dependent	1	5%	14	70%	5	
Disruptive	18	90%	0	0%	2	
Responsible	3	15%	15	75%	2	

Teachers' opinions' about students' characteristics show some interesting results. The results show differences on the teachers' opinions about boys and girls' characteristics. The teachers' opinion is not so far from students' opinion. Mainly teachers consider boys to be more aggressive and disruptive than girls. 90% of teachers said that boys are more aggressive and disruptive than girls, as showed in the students' analysis. This is the way boys are expected to act. Girls were not considered to be either aggressive or disruptive, because in Cape Verdean culture they are not supposed to act like boys.

Girls were considered to be more active, attentive, calm, cooperative, dependent and responsible. The same happened in the students' analysis. Teachers answered with 80% for active, 85% for attentive, 80% for calm, 70% for dependent, 75% for cooperative and 75% for responsible to characterize girls. In contrast, the result of teachers' opinions about boys are 20% for active, 0% for attentive, 20% for calm, 0% for dependent and 15% for responsible. Teachers' opinions and students' opinions are exactly the same. It proves girls and boys act as the Cape Verdean culture expects them to, in the classroom.

#### 5.4 Conclusion of the Analysis

To analyze the questionnaire, an Excel spreadsheet was used. For each question of the questionnaire, graphs were presented to follow the results of the relationship between the girls' and the boys' answers. The questionnaire was done to get information from students and teachers about the opinions they hold about what actually happens in the classroom. Two analyses were conducted, the students' analysis and the teachers' analysis. The result of the two analyses answered the question "what is the relationship between girls and boys participation in EFL classroom?" In students' analysis, it was found that girls and boys centered on themselves to answer questions that benefit them and that they centered on the

opposite sex to answer questions that penalized the others. For example when they had to answer questions that were asked in a positive aspect, they usually answered in regard to themselves. They gave themselves a higher percentage than the opposite sex. But when they had to answer questions that were worded in a negative manner they referred to the opposite sex penalizing them. The difference between the answers of girls and boys was slightly different. Girls and boys are slightly different in the classroom, concerning their behavior, their characteristics, and certain aspects of their participation. Even when there is little difference between boys and girls, some exceptions could be found. The number of girls who said they participated on average six or more times per day is more than boys. Girls seemed to be shyer than boys to participate, but they are more interested in the EFL classroom, this is one of the reasons that girls participate more in the language classroom. Concerning the girls' and boys' behavior, it was found that girls are calmer, they are more attentive in the classroom, they cooperate more than boys and they are more responsible than boys. Boys were considered more active, but they disrupt more than girls and they are considered to be more aggressive in the classroom. All of these show the fact that girls participate more than boys. Both girls and boys should have a high rate of participation in the class, feel free to participate and make mistakes, for that teachers need to encourage them. In the classroom, teachers have to control the students' ways of behaving. Helping students to behave in a way that does not disrespect either teachers or colleagues. It is important to encourage students not to disturb one another when participating. Teachers should never treat students differently or expect them to act differently.

In the teachers' analysis it was found that girls and boys are greatly different in the classroom. It was found that teachers treat students differently by expecting more girls than boys to participate in class and by praising more boys than girls when they participate. Mainly it was found that girls participate more than boys. It was found that in teachers' opinion boys are more aggressive and disruptive in class. And girls are more active, calm, attentive and responsible. Even though boys showed in their opinion that they volunteer more than girls, girls' participation is rated higher than boys'. In sum, in both analyses it was found that girls participate more than boys because teachers expect more from them than from boys.

## **VI. Conclusion and Implications**

Class participation is an important way to evaluate students' progress in their learning, especially in language classrooms. To participate in the classroom means that students ask questions, that they take part in the discussion, and that they make comments voluntarily. Participating in the classroom depends on many factors. One of these factors is gender.

This study was addressed to find out if what was personally observed, that boys participate more than girls is really what happens in our secondary schools. This observation brought the assumption that there was a disparity afforded males and females based on their participation in EFL classrooms. To overcome that assumption teachers and students were surveyed to see what their opinions and perceptions were towards girls and boys participation.

The objective of the study was to call the instructors' attention to what happens in their classrooms and give them suggestions that would positively help them to promote an active and equal participation in the classroom from girls and boys. The study found surprising results because boys were expected to have higher participation than girls. In contrast it was found that girls participate more than boys contrarily to what the author originally observed. Girls participate more because teachers expect more from them, they ask more questions and they are more attentive than boys in class. It was found that teachers spend more time with boys in order to control the class, teachers praise them more and that boys are more disruptive than girls. It did not implicate that boys participate more in class. It was found that both girls and boys have the same rate in terms of feeling comfortable to participate in class. However, the results did not show that they have the same rate of participation. To this end teachers are suggested some strategies for active and equal participation for both girls and boys.

### **6.1 Strategies for Active and Equal Participation in EFL Classrooms**

Teachers are suggested to have the same expectations from girls and boys, because their expectations influence students' participation.

Because boys are more disruptive, teachers tend to get involved with them more because of their behaviour. They have more discipline problems than girls. But it is suggested that teachers should involve girls also because they need teachers' attention, too. Teachers should give all students an opportunity to participate in the classroom, independently of whether the student is a stellar one or not, girl or boy, disruptive or not.

To raise boy's participation in class teachers should have high expectations from them too. Also, teachers are recommended to engage students the same in class because all students in class deserve to be treated without difference. It is wrong giving only one gender attention in the classroom or praising only one gender. It is a stereotypical gesture and it brings inequality into the classroom and into schools. To avoid inequality teachers need to avoid any gesture of gender stereotyping in our classrooms. In the classroom all students deserve the instructors' attention. We should give equal attention to males and females involving all of them.

There were many aspects of participation that showed no differences between the boys and girls participation because they were found to have slight differences in what teachers and students perceived about the class participation. These differences include aspects such as being comfortable to participate in class, the aspect of shyness, the aspect of volunteering to participate in class and the aspect of being afraid to participate in class. However, overall girls are seen to participate more than boys. To avoid this difference, boys need to be encouraged to raise their participation in a non-disruptive way. They need to be encouraged to speak when they know the correct answers. Even when they are not called upon, teachers need to keep them volunteering in class, encouraging them to speak in class. Teachers have to give students more freedom to speak, let them show what they can do, to make mistakes and learn. Lim(2003) gave a helpful suggestion about making mistakes; "Teachers, first, should emphasize that making mistakes is an inevitable process in learning a foreign language and second, helps relieve the face saving concerns by making every students speak English in class and at school" p.3.

## **6.2 The Reliability and the Validity of the Study**

The results found are reliable and they are valid. They are found to be reliable because the same conclusion will be found if analyzed by another observer.

Reliability, the extent to which (a) an independent researcher, on analyzing one's data, would reach the same conclusions and (b) of one's study would yield similar results. Internal reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research. External reliability refers to the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study (Nunan, 1992, p.231-2).

Also, It can be said that the results found are valid. Valid because the same situation can be observed and the same findings can be found. Nunan (1992) explains that "validity is the extent to which one has really observed what one set out to observe, and the extent to which

one can generalize one's findings from the subjects and situations to other subjects and situations" (p. 232).

It is hoped that these results will help the present and the future Cape Verdean teachers to change the rate of participation of boys and that they can help foster equality and active participation on the parts of both girls and boys in EFL. For this, teachers are advised to expect both girls and boys to participate in class in equal amounts, by giving both of them high levels of teaching attention. Because in the classroom all students should be treated the same' independently of their gender. We can prepare the future generation for classrooms, schools, society, and a world without discrimination. This is the responsibility of all teachers. All students are in the class to have success. Participating in class is one of the ways that lead to success. It means that if students participate in class it contributes to them getting more success in their present life and more opportunities in their future life. Success in the present because they can be learning in the class and success in the future because as English is the most spoken language, participating in class helps them in their future career. But, part of students' success depends on teachers' treatment of them regardless of their gender.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

The following points are the limitations of this study. First of all, it was just based on students and teachers opinion. The opinions are not a scientific fact although they do provide evidence of experienced reality. Another factor is that students may not tell everything that happens in the classroom. They may lie when answering the questionnaires, or tell half-truths they think are true. Also the results were not analysed by school levels of students. It was analysed together in order to get an overall idea of Praia schools. It is advised for a future study to analyse the results per level and possibly per school. There were also a limited number of teachers surveyed and their answers were not analysed by school. All the teachers' answers were analysed together. In the future, it is advised to analyse the teacher's answers per school. The observations were only done in two schools and two levels. It is suggested for a future study to observe more classrooms, more schools and more levels.

This study was undertaken in order to answer the following research question: "what is the relationship between students' gender and class participation in Cape Verdean EFL classrooms?" The answer for the research question is that there is relationship between students gender and class participation in Cape Verdean EFL classrooms because there is significant difference between girls and boys participation. Boys disrupt class more often and they are more aggressive than girls. Girls participate more, are more active in class, and

they ask more questions than boys. Other factors did not have significant differences, but these factors do show that there is a difference between the way girls and boys participate in class. Gender affects class participation, both who participates, how, and when.

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**Appendix 1**

Ao Director da Escola Secundaria\_\_\_\_\_

Praia, aos 03 de Abril de 2008

**Assunto:** Autorização para aplicação de um questionário

No âmbito de poder realizar o seu trabalho do fim de curso intitulado “***Gênero e a participação nas aulas de Inglês***”, Maria Gorette Tavares Garcia, estudante dos Estudos Ingleses no Instituto Superior da Educação, vem por este meio pedir a vossa autorização para aplicar um questionário para professores e alunos de Inglês deste recinto escolar. Pretende-se fazer a 90 alunos (dos níveis 1-6, 15 alunos por cada nível) e a todos os professores. Junto vai um exemplo dos dois questionários.

Ciente da vossa atenção agradece.

Praia, 03 de Abril de 2008

Pede deferimento

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6. Os alunos são apreciados diferentemente nas aulas de inglês no que concernem os seus gêneros? De exemplos.

7. Qual é a sua expectativa no que concerne a participação nas aulas?

☐ Mais meninas

☐ mais rapazes

8. Os rapazes e raparigas respondem de modo diferente as técnicas utilizadas pelo professor? Como?

9. Como e que a presença dos rapazes afecta a participação das meninas nas aulas de inglês? E vice-versa?

10. Na sua opinião, de quem são as seguintes características(na sala de aula)? Le a lista embaixo e ponha uma cruz.

	Meninas	Rapazes
a) Agressivos(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Activos(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Atentos(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Calmos(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Cooperadores(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Dependentes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Perturbadores(as)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Responsáveis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Appendix 3

#### Questionário para Aluno (a)s

Prezado (a) aluno(a), as suas respostas a este questionário são de extrema importância. Por favor, seja honesto (a) ao responder às questões postas. Apreciamos a sua colaboração.

1. Sexo:            ☐M            ☐F
2. Sexo do(a) professor(a) de Inglês:    ☐M            ☐ F
3. Idade: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Nome da Escola \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ano de escolaridade \_\_\_\_\_
6. Morada\_\_\_\_\_
7. Nível de Inglês:            ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6
8. Participas nas aulas de Inglês (podes escolher mais do que uma opção)
  - ☐ quando fores chamado pelo(a) professor(a)
  - ☐ voluntariamente
  - ☐ Porque sabes as respostas
  - ☐ Porque a matéria te interessa
  - ☐ Porque sentes a vontade para falar a frente dos alunos e do (a) professor (a)
  - ☐ Porque tentas a resposta mesmo que esteja errada
  - ☐ Porque não tens medo que o professor ralhe contigo se a resposta estiver errada
  - ☐ Outras \_\_\_\_\_
9. Não participas nas aulas de Inglês
  - ☐quando não fores chamado pelo (a) professor(a)
  - ☐porque não gostas de ser voluntário (a)
  - ☐ porque não sabes a resposta
  - ☐ Porque a matéria não te interessa
  - ☐ Porque es tímido( a) não sentes a vontade para falar a frente dos alunos e do (a) professor(a)

- ☐ Porque tens vergonha de cometer erros quando falares
- ☐ Porque tens medo que o professor ralhe contigo se responderes errado
- ☐ Outras \_\_\_\_\_

10 Na tua opiniao:

Meninas Rapazes

- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Quem participa mais nas aulas de Inglês na tua turma?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem o professor mais motiva para participar nas aulas de Inglês? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Para quem o professor da mais atenção nas aulas?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem perturba mais as aulas de Inglês?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem faz mais perguntas nas aulas de Inglês?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem o professor mais ajuda a responder as perguntas orais?       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem o professor faz perguntas mais difíceis?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quem o professor mais pune?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. Participarias melhor se professor fosse:

- ☐ masculino      ☐ feminino      ☐ não te importas

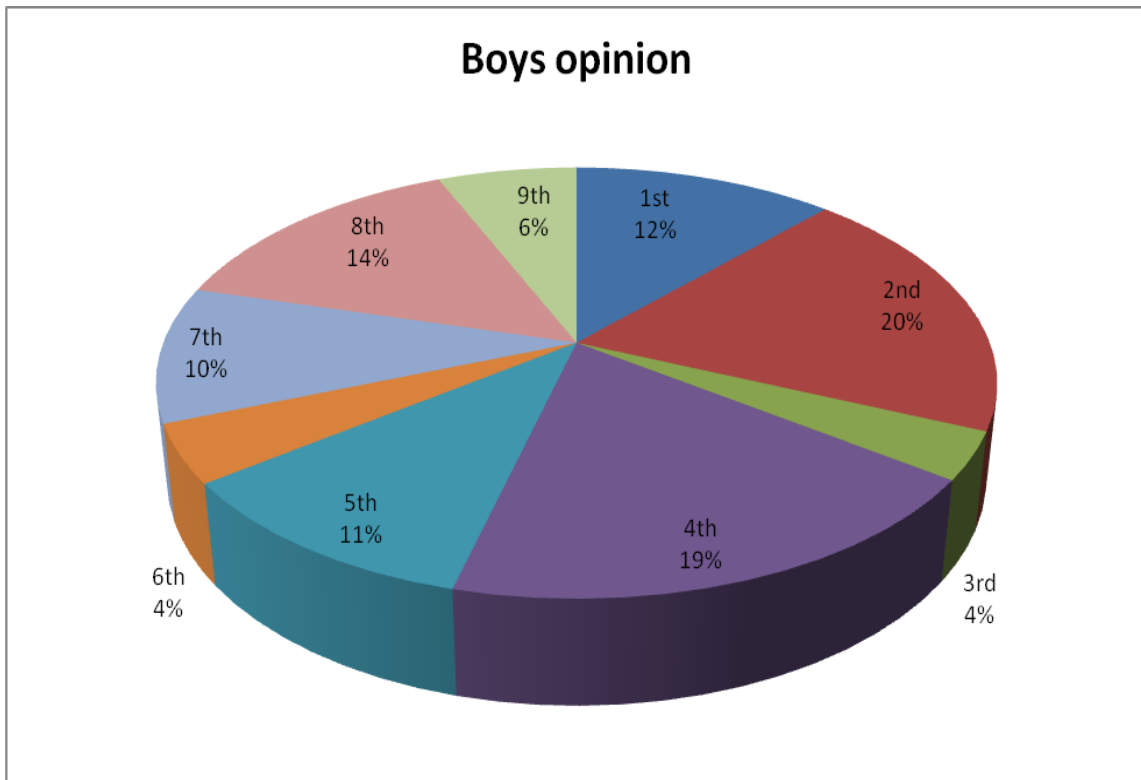
12. Quantas vezes participas nas aulas de Inglês por dia?

- ☐ 0      ☐ 1      ☐ 2-3      ☐ 4-5      ☐ 6 ou mais

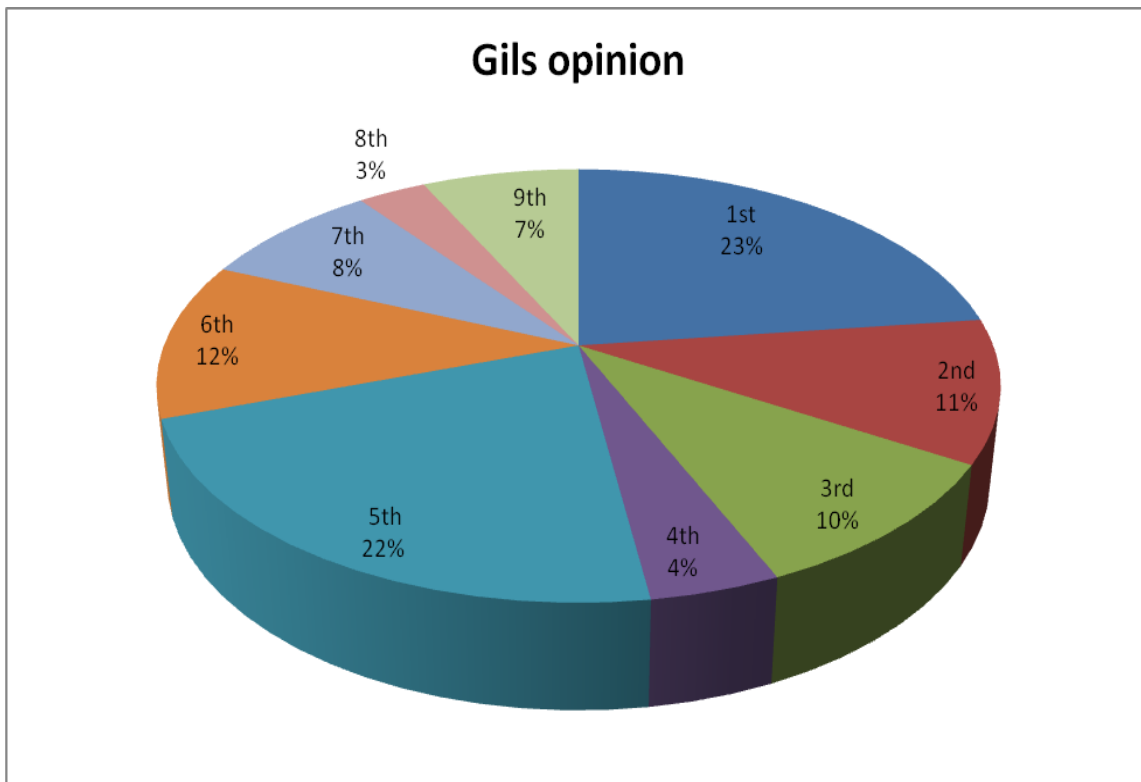
13. Na tua opiniao, de quem são as seguintes características (na sala de aula)? Le a lista em baixo e ponha uma cruz.

- |                      | Meninas                  | Rapazes                  |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| i) Agressivos(as)    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Activos(as)       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Atentos(as)       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) Calmos(as)        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) Cooperadores(as)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n) Dependentes       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o) Perturbadores(as) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| p) Responsaveis      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. O que te faria ficar a vontade e participar mais na aula de Ingles? Porque?

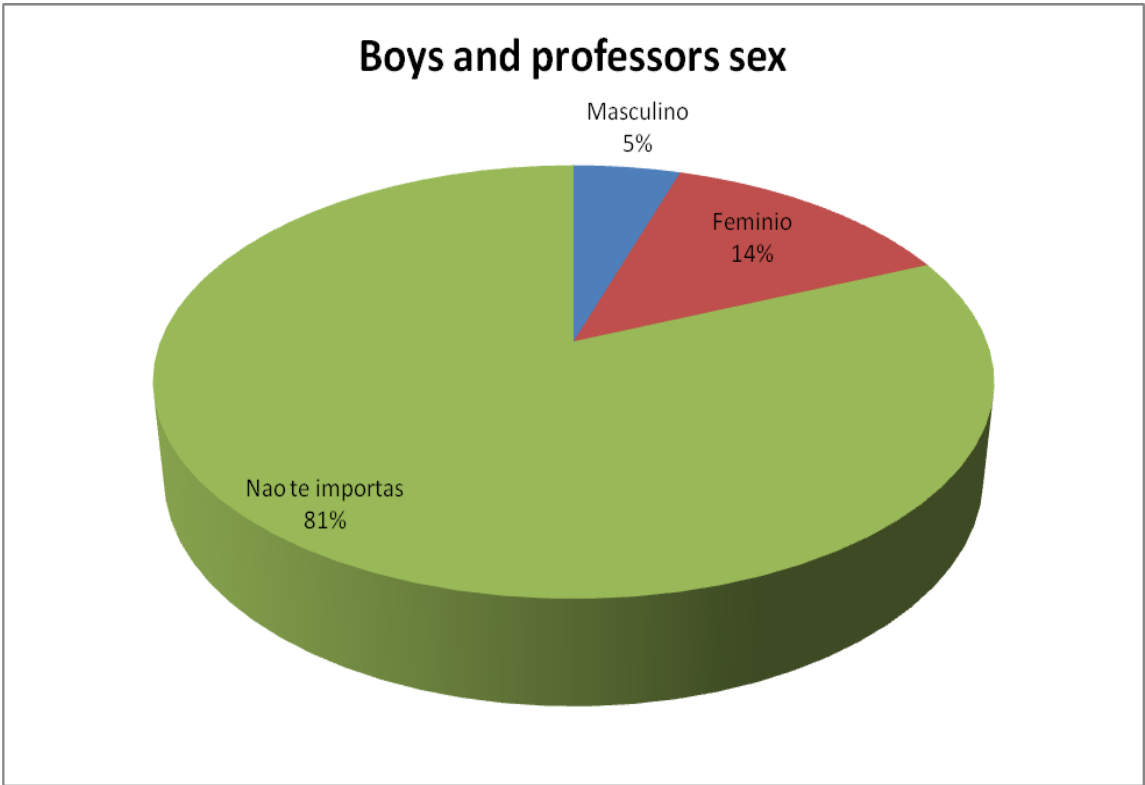
**Appendix 4**

Graph 1-Boys Opinion

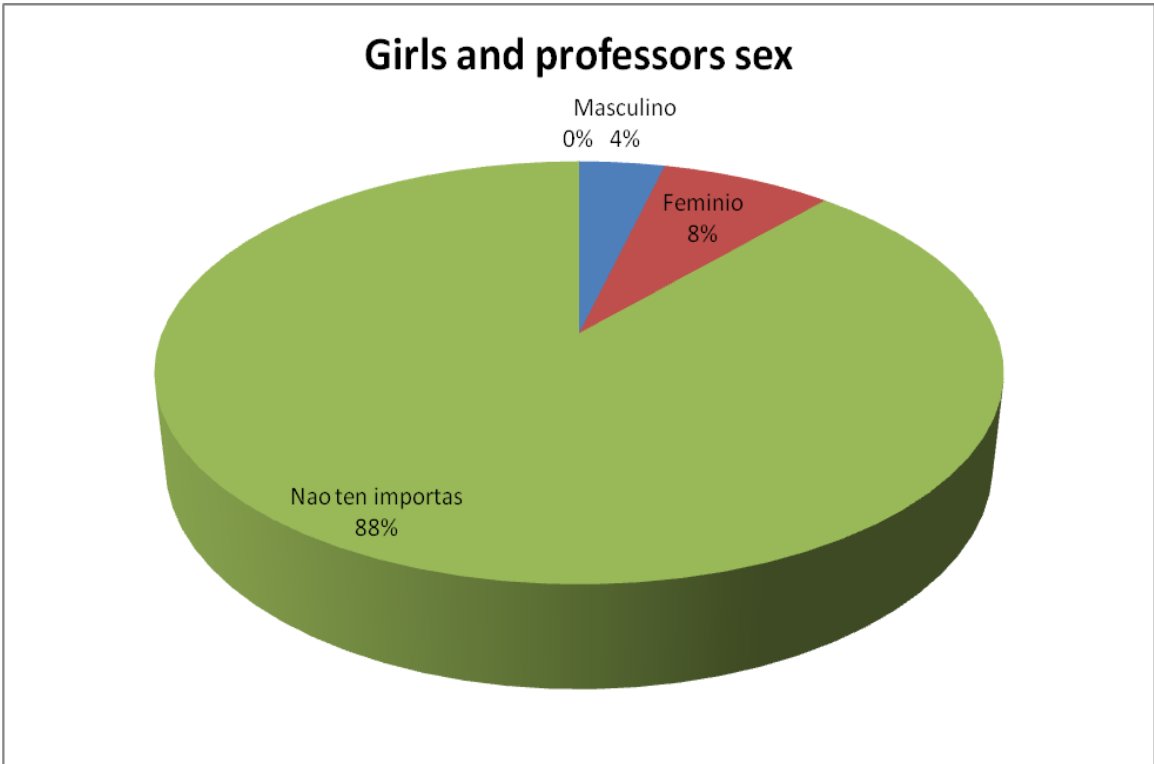


Graph 2- Girls Opinion

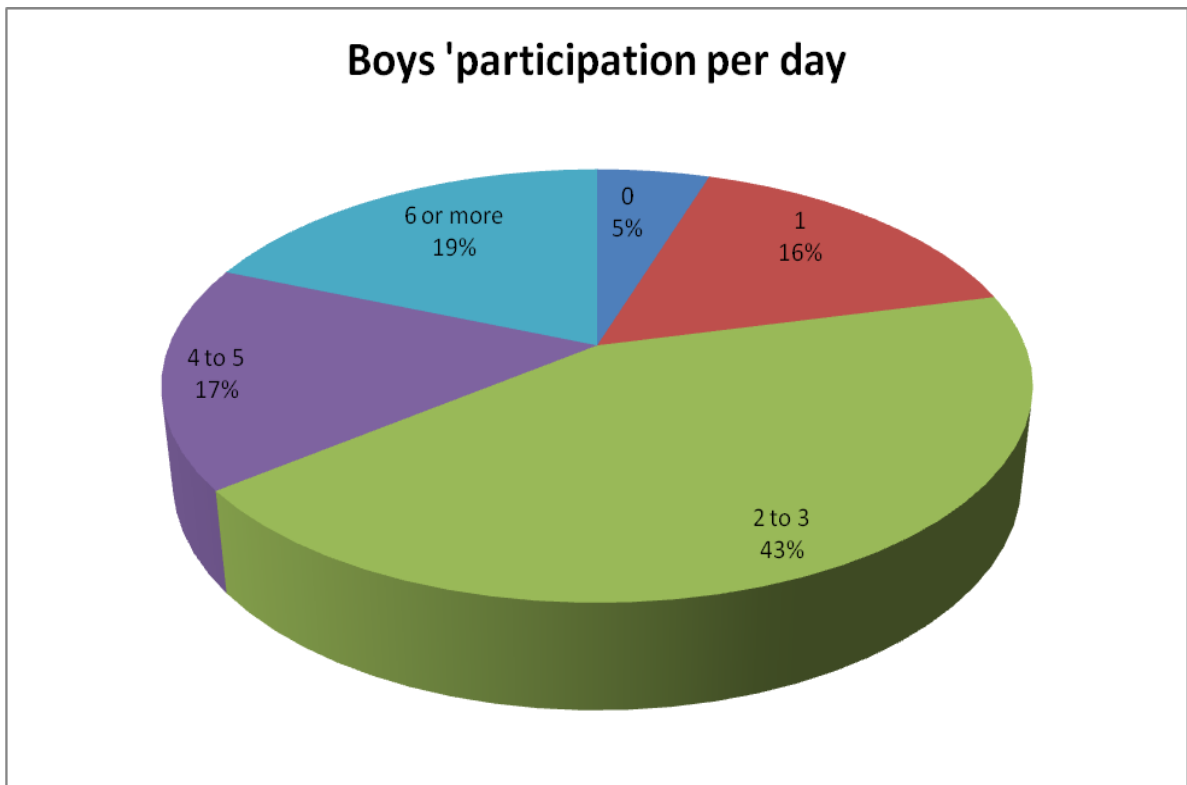
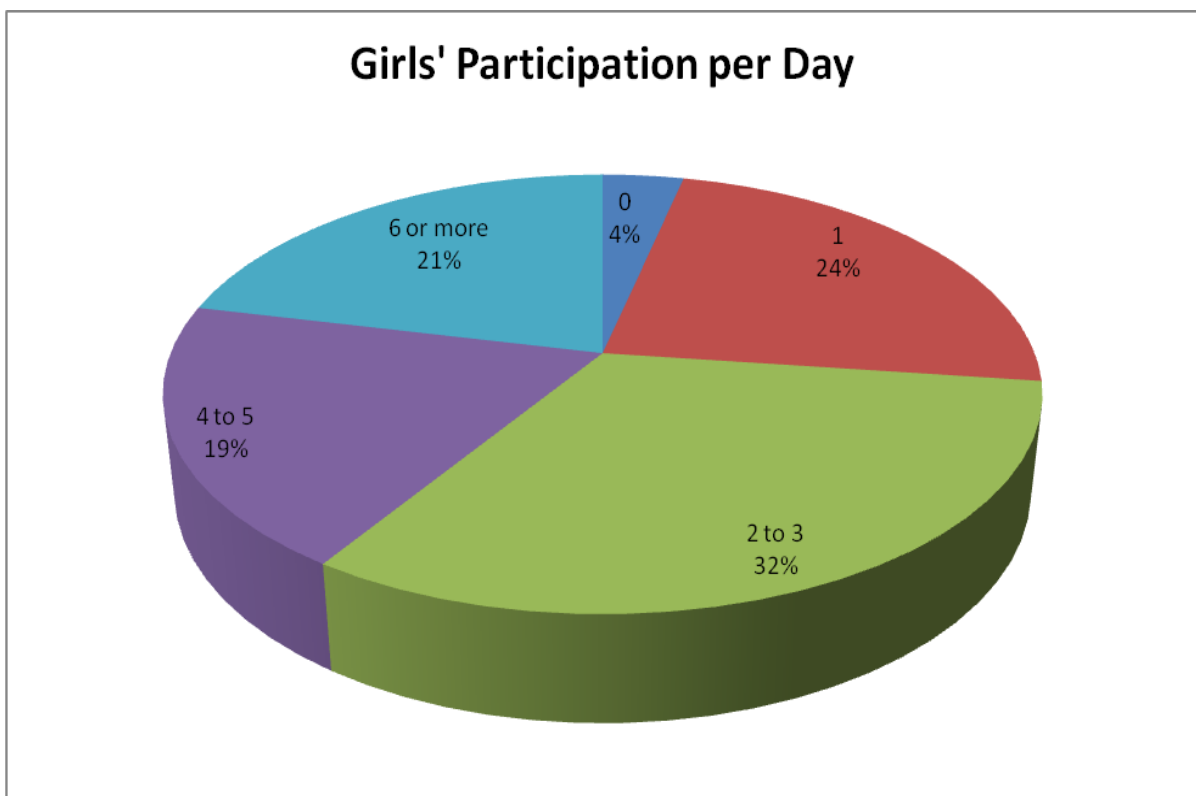
Appendix 5



Graph 3- Boys and Professor Sex

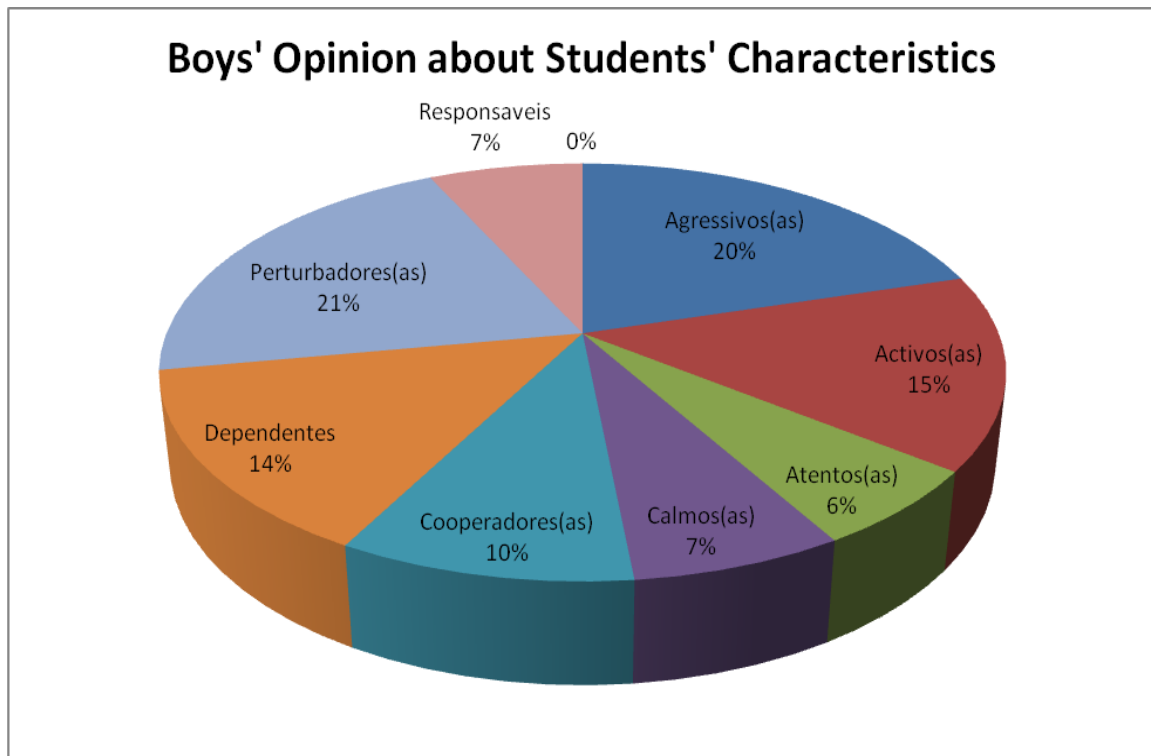


Graph 4- Girls and the Professor Sex

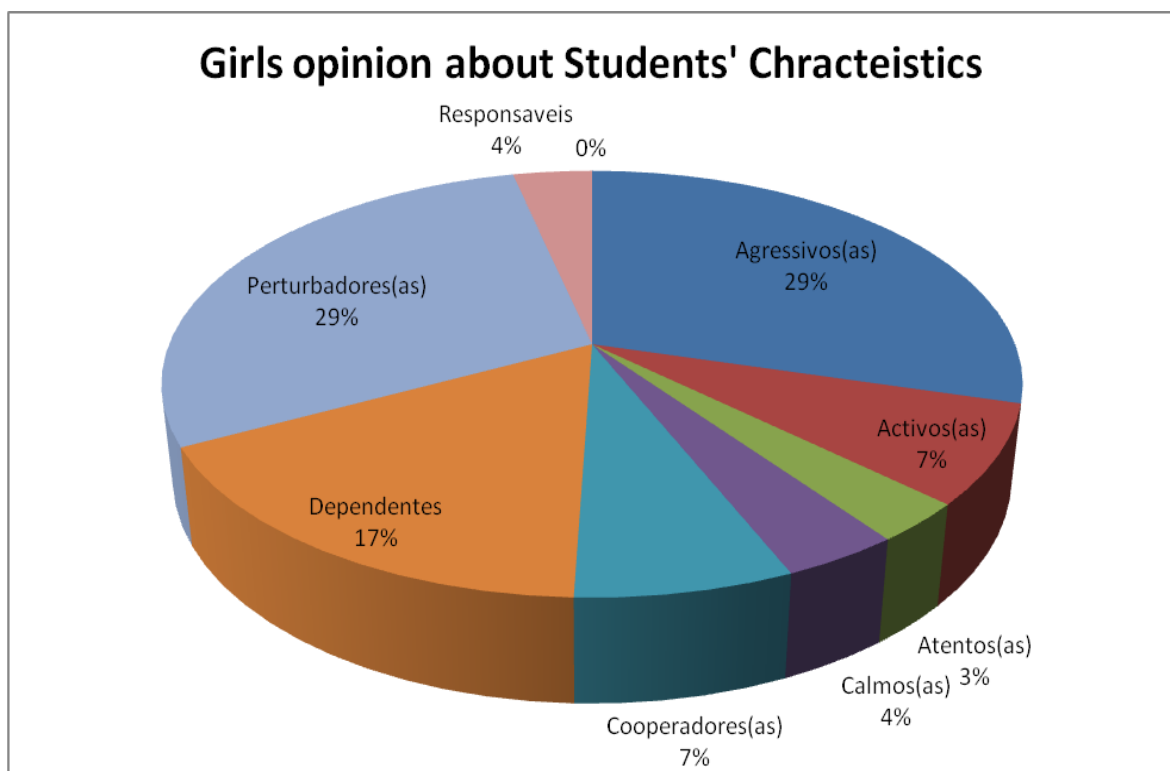
**Appendix 6****Graph 5-**Boys Participation per Day**Graph 6-** Girls' Participation per Day



## Appendix 7



**Graph 7-** Boys' Opinion about Students' Characteristics



**Graph 8-** Girls' Opinion about Students' Characteristics